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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (center) chairs his first cabinet meeting yesterday in Jerusalem. (Isaac Harari)

Ivry to head National Security Council

DAVID MAKOVSKY

PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu began his first full day in office yesterday by leading his cabinet to a variety of decisions and appointments that will concentrate greater power in his hands.

Two new bodies were established - a National Security Council (NSC) and a Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) - which will enable more executive decisions to be made in the Prime Minister's Office.

The NSC, to be headed by longtime Defense Ministry Director-General David Ivry, a former OC Air Force, is to coordinate the different security branches of the government. Netanyahu met with Ivry yesterday to discuss his duties.

The cabinet also approved moving the supervision of the Israel Broadcasting Authority from the Communications Ministry to the Prime Minister's Office. Wags said the body might now be called the BiBiC.

During the election campaign, Netanyahu pledged to privatize the body.

Netanyahu has also declared his intention to focus on economic reform, budget cutting, and privatization. A ministerial panel on the latter, to be headed by Netanyahu, was also established yesterday. This has led insiders to say he plans to be the "Margaret Thatcher of Israel."

Yet, sources note, Netanyahu will have to balance his desire for economic reform with his promises to provide additional financial assistance to haredim and settlers.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai was not given advance notice that Netanyahu planned to take Ivry from him, and voiced his surprise at the cabinet meeting. Netanyahu has also promised to turn supervision of the defense industries over to a national in-

fracture ministry to be created for Ariel Sharon. Taken together, sources said, this suggests the Defense Ministry may lose a little of its clout.

Ivry headed Israel's strategic dialogue with the Pentagon, supervised weapons purchases from US, monitored the defense industries, and headed the arms control talks with the Arabs. He is known to have been held in very high regard by former defense ministers Moshe Arens, Yitzhak Rabin, and Shimon Peres.

Sources said his selection demonstrates that Netanyahu wants to make sure the defense establishment cooperates with the new NSC, and does not seek to bureaucratically side-step it.

Former OC Northern Command Vossi Peled, who was considered a leading contender for the NSC job, is now rumored to be in line for Ivry's old post.

Netanyahu announced to the cabinet that Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel will head the CEA. He is also to have a second five-year term as governor. Frenkel was Netanyahu's first choice for finance minister, but pressure from within the Likud put Dan Meridor in the post.

Frenkel will also be a member of the new privatization panel. The other members are Meridor and Justice Minister Ya'acov Ne'eman.

Cabinet secretary Danny Navah emphasized Netanyahu's priority on privatization. "He wants to privatize quickly," Navah said.

In a pre-election interview, Netanyahu said that within his first 100 days in office, he plans to lay the legal groundwork for the privatization of 50 of the 160 state-owned companies.

The cabinet also decided that Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush would essentially run the portfolio, even though it remains officially in Netanyahu's hands. Former cabinet secretary Shmuel Hollander was named civil service commissioner.

Sharon 'mega ministry' still on hold

SARAH HONIG

THE creation of a new national infrastructure portfolio for Likud MK Ariel Sharon appeared last night a far more difficult mission than had initially been supposed. Most ministers who would have to contribute spheres of influence to the new ministry expressed vehement opposition to doing so yesterday.

Sharon asked to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and today is to send him an exhaustive report he has compiled on what the new ministry most encompasses.

Those around Netanyahu exuded optimism yesterday that the matter would be resolved "in a few days." They did not explain what their optimism was based on.

In sharp contrast to the haste in which the idea of the new ministry was floated on Tuesday, nothing happened on the matter yesterday at Netanyahu's end. Foreign Minister David Levy, chief catalyst in the moves to custom-tailor a ministry for Sharon, was silent and inactive on Sharon's behalf as well.

There is no certainty such a ministry could be established. Its components would have to come from the Agriculture, Construction and Housing, Energy, and

Transport ministries. These ministers, who decried Sharon's absence from the cabinet and warmly urged his co-optation on Tuesday, let it be known they do not want his entry to be at their expense.

"It is ridiculous to take the Water Commission out of the Agriculture Ministry," Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan said. "Without it, there is no ministry... If they insist on transferring the commission to the new ministry, then Netanyahu will have to choose whether he wants me or Arlik in the government." This is considered a very potent threat, since Eitan heads the five-man "Tsomet" faction within the Likud.

The National Religious Party's Yitzhak Levy, who took over both the Energy and Transport ministries, had a nearly identical message: "I was given whole portfolios and not parts of portfolios, and I intend to keep my portfolios intact." The new ministry would swallow the Energy Ministry and bite into Transport, removing from it the railways, sea ports, and the planning of new airports.

United Torah Judaism has already announced it will object to removing any-

thing from the Construction and Housing Ministry, including the Public Works Department, which is responsible for road construction around the country, and the Rural Development Department.

Sharon is expected to pressure Netanyahu to play hardball with the rejectionist ministers. He phoned Netanyahu yesterday to make a date and informed him he intends to present him with a thick file he and a team of experts have prepared listing what the new ministry must include. As Levy envisioned the ministry, it would be one of the largest and most powerful in the government.

Formally, Sharon has not yet given his consent to accepting the portfolio and he will not do so until he knows what it will include. Sharon will not accept anything less than what was originally discussed with him Tuesday night, say his aides. He would like a team assigned by Netanyahu to meet with his team and come up with a description of the new portfolio.

Political observers agreed yesterday that Sharon must act soon or miss his opportunity. The more time goes by, the less help Sharon is likely to get from his Likud allies, who will have settled into their own jobs and may forget his cause.

Cabinet to meet on Fridays

DAVID MAKOVSKY

IN A bid to raise his ministers' productivity, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the first cabinet meeting yesterday that its weekly sessions will now be held on Friday instead of Sunday.

Newly named cabinet secretary Danny Navah told reporters: "The prime minister wants ministers to work a five-day week without interruption," with Friday being the sixth day that can be devoted to cabinet matters.

Religious ministers noted the change may have to be reconsidered if a long cabinet debate is expected during the winter, when Shabbat begins early.

Some observers believe one of the byproducts of the decision will be less grandstanding by ministers, who up to now have tended to make grandiloquent statements after meetings in the hope that they would be quoted. There are no newspapers on Saturday.

Court delays ruling on Ne'eman appointment

EVELYN GORDON

THE High Court of Justice yesterday deferred a final decision on the propriety of Ya'acov Ne'eman's appointment as justice minister, but said there was no reason for him not to take office in the meantime.

The court was hearing a petition by *Globes* journalist Yoav Yitzhak, who claimed Ne'eman's appointment is inappropriate because of various criminal acts Ne'eman had allegedly committed.

Justices Gavriel Bach, Ya'akov Kedmi and Dalia Dorner quickly dismissed most of Yitzhak's allegations as groundless. But they were troubled by an allegation that Ne'eman tried to persuade a witness in the trial of Shas MK Aryeh Deri not to cooperate with police.

The witness, Martin Brown, testified in England this week. In the course of his testimony, a 1992 police memorandum was submitted that allegedly detailed a phone conversation between Brown and Dep.-Cmdr. Meir Gilboa of the Israel Police. According to the memorandum, Brown called Gilboa after making his statement to the police, and complained that Ne'eman had summoned him to his office the following day and asked: "What are you doing helping the police?" Brown said Ne'eman made similar statements on other occasions thereafter, the memorandum continued, and charged that Ne'eman's interference came after Deri had appointed him to chair an Interior Ministry committee.

Both Ne'eman and Brown deny such an event ever took place. In an affidavit to the court,

Ne'eman said Brown had called him after giving his statement and complained that the police pressured him into saying things that were untrue, and that he had advised Brown to make a statement about this as well. Gilboa was never questioned about the issue during his testimony in the Deri trial.

Attorney-General Mishael Ben-Yair told the court "there was no choice but to open a preliminary inquiry into the matter, for the sake of determining whether there is enough evidence to justify the opening of a police investigation."

The justices lambasted the State Attorney's Office, saying there was no excuse for having waited four years to conduct the inquiry. They rejected government attorney Uzi Fogelman's explanation that when such a "side" issue arises, long delays are common, since investigating the side issue before the witness in question has testified could damage the main case.

"A witness goes to the police and says: 'They're pressuring me.' How is it possible to wait several years and only then say: 'We'll look into it?'" Kedmi asked. "When you say 'there is no choice [but to look into this],' that implies it's a serious matter. If it's a serious matter, why didn't you investigate immediately?"

Furthermore, Bach noted, it is not clear what crime the State Attorney's Office thinks might have been committed, since the alleged pressure took place after Brown had given his statement.

Regarding the other charges raised by Yitzhak, both Ne'eman and Ben-Yair told the court they were baseless. Two of these charges were that Ne'eman had fraudulently obtained the refund

of a NIS 25,000 court fee, and that he had submitted a false report clearing the managers of the Kochav Hashomron company of wrongdoing while serving as the company's liquidator. In both cases, the state had found no reason to open a criminal investigation, and the High Court of Justice had upheld this decision.

A third case revolved around Ne'eman's role in obtaining a pardon - before charges had even been filed - for four GSS officials who shot a captured terrorist. Ne'eman said he had not suggested this move, but was simply asked by then prime minister Shimon Peres whether such a step would be legal, and had advised Peres that it would be. The High Court later upheld his opinion.

A fourth affair was the Bejski Commission's finding that Ne'eman was partially responsible for the 1983 bank shares collapse. However, the state noted that the commission did not recommend criminal charges against Ne'eman, nor did it bar him from any post except director-general of the Finance Ministry.

Finally, Yitzhak charged that Ne'eman took money from Avraham Shapira's Carmel Carpets company while representing US-based MAT Investment Corp - one of the firm's creditors. Ne'eman said the payment had been requested by MAT, since in the US it is standard practice for borrowers to pay the legal fees incurred by lenders trying to re-coup their money.

Ne'eman said the entire petition stemmed from his successful representation of a client in a slander suit against Yitzhak.

"This is a vindictive nuisance petition filed by a petitioner who has made it a personal goal to plot against me," Ne'eman wrote. "There is no evidence to support Yoav Yitzhak's baseless accusations."

Levy: Arabs should not look for trouble

New foreign minister calls Arafat Israel's 'partner'

DAVID MAKOVSKY

ARAB leaders at the Cairo summit this weekend should not increase "unnecessary" tensions, but rather seek ways of cooperating with the new government, Foreign Minister David Levy said yesterday.

But as he began his tenure, tough statements from the Arab world escalated in reaction to the government's guidelines.

"The tension which they are trying to produce is unnecessary, completely unnecessary," Levy told reporters after he and his predecessor, Ehud Barak, spoke at the changeover ceremony at the Foreign Ministry. "I expect to hear from this summit, which is due to take place in the coming days, a message of peace, a warm hand towards the State of Israel so that we will be able to work together."

Levy's statements differed, at least in tone, from those of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Speaking of Syria, he said: "If

both sides want peace - and we want peace - we'll meet in the middle."

Asked if he would meet Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, he called him Israel's "partner" and said he does not rule out anything.

"We said there's a partner. We didn't create him; he's a fact on the ground. We're interested in conducting the dialogue with him on continuing the peace process on the condition that he keeps his commitments."

Arafat was one of the few Arab leaders not mentioned by Netanyahu during his inaugural Knesset speech on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Syrian officials are reportedly pushing for the Cairo summit to issue a declaration urging Arab states not to continue with normalization until the peace process goes forward, and even urging those states which

lifted their economic boycott of Israel to reinstate it.

Syria wants a united Arab front against the "aggressive" policies of Netanyahu, Reuters quoted one Syrian official.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, who sources say is working with his Syrian counterpart Farouk Shara to toughen the float communiqué, said that "even if [Netanyahu's Knesset speech] contained talk of peace and welcomed good relations with neighboring countries, it was nevertheless full of noes. If this speech made anything clear, it made clear the hard-line Israeli position, which is something which can only have negative effects on the peace process."

Aides to Netanyahu deny this, insisting Netanyahu is committed to the peace process. They point out that in his speech, he made sure to specify that Israel is "not

against Islam" and does not equate the militancy of Hamas with Islamic doctrine.

Mahmond Abbas, who heads the Palestinian team preparing for the final-status negotiations, told the Palestinian news agency Wafa that Netanyahu's "policy guidelines carry many nos which contradict the spirit of peace."

Arafat, speaking in China during a visit to the Far East, said the Oslo accords were an international agreement rather than a bilateral one between the Palestinians and Israel.

"Now is the turn of the international community," he said. "I am not alone now. We hope everyone will be committed to what has been agreed upon."

Foreign Ministry deputy director-general Eitan Beotzur, who worked closely with Levy during his previous tenure in the office from 1990-1992, is widely rumored as his new choice to be the new director-general.

EU softens stance towards Netanyahu

DAVID MAKOVSKY

THERE are some signs that the European Union (EU) is favoring dialog over confrontation with the new Netanyahu government, diplomatic sources say.

In a meeting of Foreign Ministry directors in Rome Tuesday before the semiannual summit of EU heads over the weekend, European diplomats did not reinsert a draft deleted 10 days earlier which explicitly called on European dignitaries to visit "Palestinian institutions" and called on Israel to accept the return of refugees.

Instead, the Middle East section of the upcoming Florence declaration is expected to merely accentuate the need to adhere to the existing peace process.

early draft came before the Israeli elections. Now there is a new political environment, and Europe wants to take Israeli public opinion into account. I think Europe wants to avoid finger-pointing and give Netanyahu a chance."

Even if this declaration is passed in its current form in Florence, it does not necessarily mean that European foreign ministers will stop visiting Orient House. Though Orient House may no longer be a matter of EU principle, it may remain one of EU practice. Or alternatively, each EU country may now have greater latitude to reach its own decision on the matter.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert has suggested that if foreign officials stop visiting Orient House, this would depoliticize the issue, and enable the Likud to stop insisting on its closure, as promised in its recent campaign.

Diplomatic sources believe that one factor which influenced the EU draft was Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's remarks at the Knesset just hours earlier, in which he welcomed an EU role in the peace process. Moreover, new Foreign Minister David Levy is known as a Europhile.

Israeli embassies throughout Europe have quietly suggesting that dialog must be tried. This is thought to be part of the reason why diplomats have decided to avoid a confrontational tone at this time.



The changing of the guard

Mordechai hits all the right notes

"I ASSUME office today as Israel's 12th defense minister," Yitzhak Mordechai said yesterday on entering his new role. "In this office, I have been preceded by the nation's great, whose contribution to national security was decisive."

He then listed his 11 predecessors, beginning with David Ben-Gurion and ending with Shimon Peres, calling them "giants who built and developed the defense forces of the Jewish people and brought about outstanding achievements."

For a political novice, he seemed to hit all the right notes in his maiden speech. He quoted Ben-Gurion: "There is perhaps no other nation in the world in which the contradiction between

its aspirations for peace and its lack of security is as great as that of the people of Israel: He remembered Yitzhak Rabin: "I served under him in the three commands I headed. Rabin was a man whose entire life was devoted to the security of Israel ... He contributed more to the IDF and the security establishment than any other man. His loss pains me."

He mentioned those disabled in the service, the bereaved families, and the families of the prisoners of war and missing in action, and invited them to the ceremony.

He went out of his way to lessen the tension between himself and Chief of General Staff

Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, whose refusal to name him his deputy forced his retirement from the army.

"I know that the IDF is in capable hands. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak is an excellent chief of general staff."

After the ceremony he had a warm embrace for Deputy Chief of Staff Matan Vilnai, the man who got the job he longed for.

He even had words of praise for his immediate predecessor, Shimon Peres, "whose entire life was devoted to the people of Israel ... You who contributed so much to our security, from the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you personally for all that you have contributed to this nation and its people."

Jerusalem Post Staff

Aloni hangs up the phone

JUDY SIEGEL

ONE woman, Shulamit Aloni, handed over the Communications Ministry in another woman, Likud MK Limor Livnat, and both were very emotional at yesterday's changeover ceremony.

Aloni said she was pleased that communications was the ministry Livnat had sought from the beginning, because motivation is important. The outgoing minister said a number of important decisions will have to be taken, including the selection of a third company to offer cellular phone service and a second and third to provide overseas dialing. Private broadcasters would have to be fought, she cautioned.

Asked about the settlers' Arutz 7 radio station, broadcasting from a ship at sea, Aloni said that if the Knesset were to legalize it - and require it to pay for frequencies and other fees - she would have no objection to its broadcasts.

Livnat, who did not mention the previous government's decision to



Incoming Communications Minister Limor Livnat (right) exchanges pleasantries with outgoing minister Shulamit Aloni.

establish a National Telecommunications Authority to eventually replace the ministry,

said she had much interest in women's and civil rights, to which Aloni had devoted her public life.

Kahalani makes no sudden moves

INTERNAL Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani yesterday said he is in favor of establishing tight control over Palestinians entering Israel, but has yet to decide if the best way is the controversial separation plan of his predecessor, MK Moshe Shahal.

Kahalani, on his first day as minister, also said he would not be taking any immediate action to close Orient House, the PLO headquarters and "foreign ministry" in Jerusalem. During the election campaign, the Likud promised to close the building because of illegal activities allegedly conducted there.

In the morning, a ceremony was held at the ministry's main office in the Sheikh Jarrah government complex in Jerusalem, at which

BILL HUTMAN

Shahal turned the ministry over to Kahalani. Shahal called Kahalani "an excellent choice for the position."

Speaking to reporters, Kahalani emphasized his need to review the range of subjects his post entails before being able to say what his policies will be. But on two central issues, Orient House and the separation plan, he indicated he would continue the same policies as his predecessor.

"As long as Orient House operates within the law, there is no reason to shut it down," Kahalani said. In order to justify the previous government's failure to close Orient House, Shahal has maintained that for the most part the PLO head-

quarters has operated legally.

Legislation passed in 1994 limiting Palestinian Authority activity in Jerusalem - and under which the Likud wanted to close Orient House - makes it largely the internal security minister's responsibility to determine if the PA is operating illegally.

"We need to look at exactly what Orient House is doing, and make sure that it is not operating as a branch of the Palestinian Authority," Kahalani said.

Asked about his opinion of the separation plan, Kahalani said: "It is essential that we take steps to prevent the infiltration of Palestinian terrorists into Israel." He said he would study the plan to see if it was the best way of preventing infiltration.

Liba'i hands reins to 'a friend'

NEW Justice Minister Ya'acov Ne'eman promised yesterday to uphold the rule of law in all its details.

At the brief ceremony in which he took over control of the ministry, there was genuine warmth between Ne'eman and outgoing minister David Liba'i.

"I came here to present a friend to you," Liba'i told the ministry staff, noting that he and Ne'eman had been friends and colleagues for more than 20 years. "I am happy to welcome him here ... and I will do everything in my power to help [him] succeed in his new job."

"In my wildest dreams I never dreamed that one day I would

EVELYN GORDON

stand here and receive from you the elite organ for integrity, justice and establishment of the principles of Israel's heritage as a Jewish and democratic state," Ne'eman responded.

He then gave a brief statement of his understanding of the rule of law, drawing on this week's Torah portion. In this portion, he said, we find the phrase "This is the statute of the law which the Lord hath commanded." This odd construction, he continued, is understood to mean that the laws of the Torah are a unified whole: One cannot say this one is less important than that

one, and therefore does not need to be observed as carefully.

The nation's legal system, he said, operates the same way: If it is to survive, those responsible for upholding the country's laws must be careful to observe all of them, in every detail - even those that might at first seem less important.

"The rule of law ... is clear and exact," he said, adding that changes can be made only via the proper legal mechanisms.

The new minister ended by joking about the ritual toast which concluded the ceremony.

Eitan wants highway reconsidered

ENVIRONMENT Minister Rafael Eitan said yesterday he hopes the government will reconsider the planned Trans-Israel Highway. Eitan was answering a question at the transition ceremony at which he took over the portfolio from Yossi Sarid.

Eitan also said he will not fire ministry staff and does not intend combining the Environment Ministry with the Agriculture Ministry, which he also heads.

He would not talk of his immediate plans, saying he has to study the material first, but he promised to take the work seriously and not discriminate against the Environment Ministry at the expense of his work in the Agriculture.

His address dispelled some of

LIAT COLLINS

the fears of the workers, who had expressed concern that ministry operations would be hampered by having only a part-time minister. Many employees were also upset by the manner in which Director-General Aharon Vardi was told he would not be staying on. On Tuesday, Eitan's longtime assistant Nehama Ronen reportedly phoned Vardi to tell him she would be replacing him.

Sarid also mentioned the switch in directors-general in his farewell address, saying that, as a professional and retired brigadier-general, Vardi deserved to be told of his future "in another way."

Many of the staff cried as they said goodbye to Sarid, and he too

would have been better to have a full-time minister, but if it has to be a part-time post, it is fortunate the minister is someone of Eitan's standing.

His suggested Eitan try to bring the Sewage Authority and National Planning and Construction Council under the Environment Ministry's jurisdiction. They are currently the responsibility of the Interior Ministry.

Eitan said he also believes the sewage problem needs to be dealt with seriously. Ronen was also present at the ceremony. Assuming the government authorizes her appointment to the position, she will become the first woman director-general of a ministry.

Begin adds a Volvo to his staff

JUDY SIEGEL

GEOLOGIST and Likud MK Ze'ev Binyamin Begin, the new science and technology minister, says his staff consists of an answering machine and a computer.

"I want you all to stay in your positions," he recalls telling them. "Let's see over the next few months whether you feel you can work with me."

Begin, a modest man known for taking public buses and doing without even a parliamentary aide, will now have to get used to a ministerial Volvo.

He was very warm in his praise of his predecessor, Shulamit Aloni, who is retiring from the Knesset. "Some say it's natural that a scientist should be science minister, but around the world, scientists have failed at running science. Minister Aloni, you did not have a science background but you learned quickly and pushed it forward."

He said he was sure the retiring Meretz leader would continue to "make revolutions and storms" from outside the Knesset.

Aloni conceded that despite her political disagreements with Begin, she respected his talents and was sure he would be a success. "You are a man with curiosity, and there are fine people here," she said. Begin, she added, would have to demand increased budgets for promoting scientific research.

In the changing-of-the-guard ceremony at the smallest ministry, several former science ministers were present, including Gideon Papp and Shimon Shetret, along with Aloni's director-general, Zvi Yamai.



New Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky (left) receives flowers from predecessor Micha Harish.

Shetret: 'I expect that the budget for the Torah world will increase'

FORMER religious affairs minister Shimon Shetret, who handed the portfolio to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday, said he fears the ministry will collapse under the rotation agreement reached between Shas and the National Religious Party.

Netanyahu is to keep the portfolio until the two parties agree on which will hold it for the first two years of the government's term.

During the brief changeover ceremony at the Prime

Minister's Office, Shetret noted that NIS 900 million of the ministry's NIS 1.2 billion budget goes to the haredim: "I expect that the budget for the Torah world will increase," he said, "but it is most important not to neglect the traditional community."

Shetret then took his leave from Chief Rabbi Efraim Bakshi-Doron and Yisrael Lau, who also said he fears the rotation agreement will adversely affect the ministry. (Tm)

Hanegbi to deal with 'tragic side of accidents'

JUDY SIEGEL

ADMITTING that he would have preferred to take the Transport Ministry and reduce the road-accident toll, new Health Minister Tzahi Hanegbi said his work with the Health Ministry "would deal with the tragic side of accidents."

Taking over from Labor MK Dr. Ephraim Sneh, who held the post for two years, Hanegbi declined to make commitments or state policies. "I know health issues at the headline level, but I want to study the problems seriously," explained the 39-year-old minister. Aware of the NIS 1 billion deficit in the national health insurance system, the lawyer and former Knesset Economics Committee chairman nonetheless said that he did not feel like "a healthy body going into a sickbed."

Sneh cited a number of new laws as his achievements, as well as the expansion of hospitals and the improved condition of Kupat Holim Clalit and Magen David Adom. He said, however, that the new minister would have to demand amendments to update the basket of health services and ensure that the health funds and



New Health Minister Tzahi Hanegbi (right) shakes hands with his predecessor Ephraim Sneh.

hospitals get immediate increments. Sneh also advocated the institution of sharan in the public hospitals, which private patients can

get care without having to resort to black medicine. The current shortage of 2,300 nursing home beds is also an urgent priority, Sneh said.

High Court enjoins replacement of civil service commissioner

EVELYN GORDON

THE High Court of Justice yesterday issued an interim injunction against the replacement of Civil Service Commissioner Yitzhak Galnoor by former cabinet secretary Shmuel Hollander.

The new government had planned to replace Galnoor at its first meeting yesterday afternoon. However, the Movement for Quality Government in Israel applied for an injunction against the move, which it charged violates the fundamental principles of good government.

The injunction, issued by Justice Gavriel Bach, will be in place until a final decision on the movement's petition against Galnoor's dismissal.

In its request, the movement noted that the civil service commissioner's role is to prevent the politicization of the civil service. Therefore, he himself should not be a political appointment, but should be independent of the government.

When a new government throws out the incumbent commissioner as its first act, it continued, this raises the suspicion that the government's goal is to remove a stumbling block to planned political appointments.

The civil service commissioner chairs an appointments committee which can fix any appointment that appears to be politically motivated.

The request charged that Galnoor's dismissal appeared to be specifically aimed at facilitating the appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as director-general of the Prime Minister's Office. At a meeting on Tuesday, the request said, the appointments committee had deferred his appointment due to questions about its propriety, which stemmed from alleged incidents of violent behavior by Lieberman while he was a student at Tel Aviv University.

"The direct causal connection between the dismissal of [Galnoor] and the non-appointment of [Lieberman] produces an unpleasant odor of improper administration, and is likely to undermine the public's faith in the rule of law in general, and in the new government in particular," the request said.

The request also noted that Hollander's appointment was inappropriate, because he had not yet been approved by the appointments committee.

Interior workers welcome new minister with protest demo

INTERIOR Minister Eli Suissa got an unexpectedly warm reception from about 25 ministry staffers yesterday, who greeted him with placards demanding a pay hike.

Before going into the handover ceremony with his predecessor, Haim Ramon, Suissa told reporters he is aware of the problem of the workers' low salaries and said he would strive to correct it "in every way possible."

In other changing-of-the-guard ceremonies yesterday: Energy and Infrastructure Minister Yitzhak Levy complimented his predecessor, Gonen Segev, for handing over a well functioning, well organized ministry. Commenting on rumors he would be asked to give up some of the areas under his control to another ministry to be headed by Ariel Sharon, Levy said that so far he had not been asked to do so.

"It is impossible to take ministries and split them up, not just because of the areas of authority involved, but because of their capacities and work efficiency," said Levy. "The country must be run in an orderly fashion." Labor

and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai told reporters one of his top priorities would be to enforce the law barring work on Shabbat, and said he would close down businesses operating illegally. Yishai took over the ministry from former prime minister Shimon Peres, who has been holding the post since former minister Ora Namir's recent appointment as ambassador to China.

Yishai said he would also be happy to reduce the number of foreign laborers in the country, at least those not required for essential development work.

Peres wished him success and told him one of the difficulties in dealing with poverty in Israel is that it exists amid abundance, and this creates its own problems. Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav said at his ministry's handover ceremony that he had received a comprehensive survey from his predecessor, Uzi Barkan, and considers furthering regional cooperation in tourism an immediate goal. "My job is to ensure the growth of tourism in Israel," Katsav said. (Tm)

With deep sorrow we announce the passing of our beloved son and brother

AVI LITOV ז"ל

The funeral will take place on Friday, June 21, 1996, at 12 p.m., at Segula cemetery, Petah Tikva.

El Al plane from New York to arrive tentatively at 7 a.m.

Shiva at 18 Ben-Yehuda St., Petah Tikva.

Deeply mourned by his parents: **Rabbi and Mrs. Moshe Litoff**
 Brothers: **Elliott, David and Joel Litoff** and families
 Sister: **Susan Shwartzman** and family

For further details call: 03-6773867, 03-5746711, 02-731558, 02-434169

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אבי ליטוב

The Netanyahu cabinet

1. BINYAMIN NETANYAHU

(Likud)
Prime Minister
Construction and Housing Minister
Religious Affairs Minister
 Binyamin Netanyahu, 46, was born in Tel Aviv, is married and the father of three children. In the 12th Knesset he was Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and a member on the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee. In the 13th Knesset he was a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee as well as the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee. Netanyahu has served as Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, and was Deputy Chief of the Israel Mission in Washington. From 1984-1988 he served as director of the Yonatan Institute. Netanyahu organized the International Conference on Terror in Jerusalem in 1979 and in Washington in 1984. In 1987 he initiated the opening of the UN Archives on Nazi War Crimes.



Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav (left) receives a parting wish for success at the ministry yesterday from his predecessor, Uzi Baram.

2. DAVID LEVY

(Gesher)
Foreign Minister
 David Levy, 47, was born in Morocco and immigrated to Israel in 1957. He is married and the father of 12 children. Though a veteran Knesset member, Levy lists his occupation as construction worker. In the 7th Knesset he was a member of the Labor Committee and the Public Services Committee. In the 8th Knesset he was Minister of Construction and Housing and Minister of Immigration and Absorption. In the 10th Knesset he was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Construction and Housing. The 11th and 12th Knesset Levy served as Minister of Construction and Housing and Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the 13th Knesset Levy was a member of the Executive Committee of the General-Labor Union, and Chairman of the Blue-White faction.

Likud "princes." Since he entered the Knesset in 1984 he has been active mainly in the Knesset Law Committee. In the 12th Knesset he served as Justice Minister. He entered the Knesset after a period (1982-1984) as Cabinet Secretary, and with a strong background of activity in the Likud establishment.

He is married to Liora, who has just left her position as head of the Bank of Israel's Research Division for a senior post with the First International Bank. They have four children and live in Jerusalem, where Meridor was born and raised.

5. YA'AKOV NE'EMAN

(No party)
Minister of Justice
 Ne'eman, 54, is an Orthodox Jew affiliated with the National Religious Party. A specialist in corporate, financial and tax law, he served as Director-General of the Finance Ministry from 1979-81, as well as on El-Al's Board of Directors, before returning to private practice in the law firm of Herzog, Fox and Ne'eman. Married with six children, he lives in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City.

Perpetuation of the Memory of the Armored Corps Fallen, and a member of the Board of Directors for Discharged Soldiers.

7. ZEVLUN HAMMER

(National Religious Party)
Minister of Education and Culture
 Zevulun Hammer, 60, was born in Haifa, is married and the father of four children. In the 7th Knesset he was Deputy Minister of Education. In the 8th Knesset he was Minister of Social Welfare and a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. In the 9th and 10th Knesset he served as Minister of Education and Culture. In the 11th Knesset he served as Minister of Religious Affairs and was a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. In the 12th Knesset he served as Minister of Religious Affairs, and from June 1990 was Minister of Education and Culture. In the 13th Knesset he was a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

6. AVIGDOR KAHALANI

(Third Way)
Minister of Internal Security
 Avigdor Kahalani, 52, married and the father of three, was a Brigadier General in the Israel Defense Force. He was a member of the 13th Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee as well as the Education and Culture Committee. He served as Chairman of the Golan Lobby in the Knesset, and was active in the Committee for the Rescue of Jews from Yemen. He is currently Chairman of the Committee for

8. RAFAEL EITAN

(Tsomet)
Minister of Agriculture and Environment
 Rafael Eitan, 67, was born in Tel-Aviv, is married and the father of three children. Eitan, who lists his professions as farmer, carpenter and pilot, is also a veteran Knesset member and a former IDF Chief of Staff. In the 11th Knesset he was a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, the State Audit Committee, and chairman of the Tsomet Movement. In the 12th Knesset he served as Minister of Agriculture, and was a member of the House Committee, the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and chairman of the Tsomet

Movement. In the 13th Knesset he headed the Tsomet party while chairing the Knesset Anti-Drug Abuse Committee and the Israel-Russian Federation Parliamentary Friendship League.

9. ELI YISHAI

(Shas)
Minister of Labor and Social Affairs
 Eli Yishai, 33, was born in Jerusalem, is married and the father of four. He is the youngest serving minister in Netanyahu's government. After completing his army service, he was appointed by Arieh Deri as director general of the Minister of Interior's office. Since 1991, Yishai has served as director general of the Shas party. When party colleague Yair Levy was sentenced to prison, Deri appointed Yishai as director-general of El Hamayan.



Education Minister Zevulun Hammer (right) gets a hug yesterday from his predecessor, Amnon Rubinstein, outside the ministry in Jerusalem.

10. ELI SUISSA

(Shas)
Minister of the Interior
 Suissa, 41, was born in Afula. He served in a Golani infantry unit, and then as a captain in the Religious Corps. During the Lebanon War, he was Deputy to the Chief Rabbi of the IDF. He joined Shas shortly after its establishment, serving first as head of the Jerusalem District in the Interior Ministry, and then as Deputy Director-General of the ministry. Suissa is married with four children, and lives in Jerusalem's Har Nof neighborhood.

11. YITZHAK LEVY

(National Religious Party)
Minister of Transport and Energy
 Yitzhak Levy, 49, immigrated to Israel from Morocco in 1957. He is married and the father of five

children. An educator by profession, he was a member of various committees in the 12th and 13th Knessets, including the House Committee, the Finance Committee, the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, and the Labor and Social Welfare Committee. He is also chairman of the Israel-Argentina Parliamentary Friendship League. Levy is a member of the Bnei Akiva Executive and World Secretariat, and General Secretary of the National Religious Movement.



Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani (left) accepts congratulations yesterday from his predecessor, Moshe Shahal.

12. NATAN SHARANSKY

(Yisrael Ba'alya)
Minister of Industry and Trade
 Sharansky, 48, was born in the Ukraine. In 1973, he requested a visa to emigrate to Israel, and the Soviet government's refusal turned him into a world-famous "refusenik." He engaged in underground Zionist activities until he was arrested in 1977 and charged with treason. He spent a year and a half in solitary confinement in Moscow's Portovo prison, during which time his wife, Avital, succeeded in making aliyah.

Though later transferred to a Siberian gulag, Sharansky gained fame as a tireless human-rights campaigner. In 1986, he was allowed to leave the USSR as part of a spy exchange with West Germany, and after a short time in West Berlin made his way to Israel. Both major parties offered him a cabinet post upon his arrival, but he expressed a desire to stay out of politics. In 1995, however, he and close friend Yuli Edelstein organized the Yisrael Ba'alya party and began to campaign for the Knesset. He is married with two daughters, and lives in Jerusalem.

13. YULI EDELSTEIN

(Yisrael B'alya)
Minister of Absorption and Immigration
 Yuli Edelstein, 38, immigrated to Israel from Russia in 1987. Edelstein was Director of Education at Gishrei Tarbut (Cultural Bridges). He was a former aliyah activist in the Moscow Jewish Movement, and from 1984-1987 was a Prisoner of Zion. Edelstein was a Department Manager at the College of Jewish Zionist Educators, and served as an adviser to Binyamin Netanyahu. One of the founders

of the Yisrael ba-Aliya Party, he headed its election campaign.

14. MOSHE KATSAV

(Likud)
Minister of Tourism
 This is the third time Moshe Katsav has held a government position. He was Labor and Social Affairs Minister in the 11th Knesset, and Transport Minister in the 12th. He sat out the past four opposition years as chairman of the Likud faction. Katsav entered the Knesset in 1977, while still serving as mayor of Kiryat Malachi, his home town. His political inclinations came to the fore while he studied economics and history at the Hebrew University, where he chaired the Gahal faction in the student union. He later became chairman of the council which determined tuition fees for higher education, and wrote for *Yedioth Ahronot*. Katsav was born in Iran in 1945, and his family immigrated six years later. He is married and the father of five.

15. LIMOR LIVNAT

(Likud)
Minister of Communications
 Limor Livnat, 46, was born in Haifa, is married and the mother of two children. Livnat has been an MK since 1992, and has served as a member of the Education and Culture Committee, as well as the Labor and Social Affairs Committee. Livnat also served on the Knesset's State Control Committee and the Committee for the Advancement of Women. She is very active in the World Likud Movement, and is a committee member of the Women's Network as well as a member of the Defense For Children committee.

16. TZAHAI HANEGBI

(Likud)
Minister of Health
 Tzahi Hanegbi, 39, was born in Jerusalem. He is married and the father of three. He studied international relations at Hebrew University and received a law degree from Tel Aviv University. Hanegbi joined the Knesset in 1988, and served as a member of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, as well as the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. He served as head of the Economics Committee in rotation in the 13th Knesset. Earlier in his career, he served as national chairman of the Student Union, and head of the Prime Minister's Bureau under Yitzhak Shamir.

17. ZE'EV BINYAMIN BEGIN

(Likud)
Science and Technology Minister
 Ze'ev Binyamin Begin, born in Jerusalem in 1943, is married and the father of six. Begin studied at the Hebrew University and received his doctorate in geology from the University of Colorado. He has served in the Knesset since 1988, and was a member of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in the 12th and 13th Knessets. He lives in Jerusalem.

Petition: Promise to hold Housing illegal

ONE section of the Likud's coalition agreement with United Torah Judaism is illegal, a petition to the High Court of Justice charged yesterday.

The clause in question states that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will hold the Housing portfolio "during his entire term," while UTJ will supply the deputy minister. The petition, by Ha'arets economic journalist Ben Zion Sirin, charges that this promise is illegal.

The Basic Law: The Government states that the prime

EVELYN GORDON

minister may at any time reshuffle portfolios among the various ministers; combine, split, or eliminate ministries altogether; and transfer responsibilities from one minister to another. However, by promising to hold the portfolio throughout the term, Netanyahu has promised out to make use of any of these powers with respect to the Housing Ministry.

Attorney Chaim Stanger, who prepared the petition, noted that

according to previous High Court rulings, it is illegal for the prime minister to promise not to exercise certain powers no matter what the circumstances. Therefore, he argued, it is illegal for Netanyahu to promise UTJ unconditionally that he will hold the portfolio for the entire term.

It is unclear how UTJ would react if the High Court did invalidate this promise, since the Housing Ministry is still much sought after by other parties. Such a move on the court's part might threaten its claim.

Labor appealing election results

THE Labor Knesset faction is appealing the election results, based on the findings of a sample check of 100 polling stations.

Labor faction chairman Ra'anan Cohen, who is also deputy chairman of the Central Elections Committee, filed a request with Jerusalem District Court yesterday, the last possible day to appeal the results. The appeal is based on a sample check carried out at 100 polling stations around the country. The sample showed more than 400 people are listed as having voted despite the fact that, according to government data, they were abroad on Election Day, Cohen said.

"I'm not making any claims or accusations. I'm just saying it's a rather strange phenomenon,"

he said.

He said there were also contradictions between the number of votes and the number of voters checked off by the polling station committees. "At one station there were 174 listed eligible voters, and 302 actual voters. Another serious problem is that we could not find the ballot slips from 16 stations."

In one Herzliya polling booth, Binyamin Netanyahu received half the number of votes received by Shimon Peres but the polling station committee marked down the opposite result, in Netanyahu's favor. Coheo said.

He said the tight timetable for the appeal allowed him to check

LIAT COLLINS

the results in only a sample number of polling stations, "but the irregularities that were discovered there are serious enough to cast a doubt on the entire election results, particularly in view of the narrow margin between the two candidates."

The petition asks the court to order the Central Elections Committee to reexamine the results at all polling stations. It will be discussed by a panel of three judges.

Meanwhile, Knesset legal adviser Zvi Inbar has questioned the procedure in which Foreign Minister David Levy was sworn into the government on Tuesday. He said the Knesset should have

discussed the appointment separately as it was not on the original list presented by Netanyahu.

The question mark over the procedure stems from the vagueness of the Basic Law: The Government, which required direct elections for the first time.

Although Inbar determined the law requires a discussion on the appointment, the Likud and even some opposition MKs cited the clause which says the Knesset has to authorize the government presented by the prime minister, but does not require its approval of subsequent appointments.

The actual appointment is not in serious doubt, however, and if necessary, the Knesset will discuss it at its next plenum session on Monday.

Knesset prepares Moslem prayer room

LIAT COLLINS

THE Knesset is getting ready to meet the needs of religious Moslem MKs by preparing a special prayer room on the fifth floor. There is already a small synagogue on the first floor, which now serves a larger number of regular users than before with the recent influx of religious Jewish MKs and their aides.

The Knesset Arrangements Committee, chaired by MK Michael Eitan (Likud), agreed to the request for a prayer room by MKs Abdul Malik Dehamshe and Abdul Wahab Darawshe (Democratic Arab Party-United Arab List).

Darawshe told reporters that Moslem MKs deserve services equal to those provided Jewish MKs.

Meanwhile, the impact of the greater number of religious Jewish MKs apparently has been felt in the cafeteria, where the kosher supervisor was seen yesterday asking a waitress to wear clothes that at least cover her belly button.

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Yeltsin garners support for second round

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin, rolling up support for the second round of Russia's electoral race, won the backing of one of the first-round losers yesterday and an aide hinted at a deal with the man who took fourth place.

Yeltsin, who portrays the election as a crusade against a communist revival, has already tempted third-placed candidate Alexander Lebed into his own camp with two key jobs in the Russian security apparatus.

He pulled out of a top-level international gathering yesterday to give himself more time for the presidential race.

"It's now more important to be here," Yeltsin told reporters, announcing he would attend the summit of the Group of Seven industrialized countries in Lyon, France.

"I took the decision not to go because Russia will be holding the second round of the presidential election just five days later."

A senior official made clear that the Central Electoral Commission, which sets the date of the second round, favored Wednesday July 3 for the runoff. The commission's deputy chairman told reporters it was wrong to vote on a weekend because this would violate citizens' rights to rest.

Russian elections are traditionally held on Sundays.

Yeltsin, 65, faces a tough second round against communist Gennady Zyuganov, who

News agencies
MOSCOW

won 32 percent of the votes last Sunday, tapping a vein of discontent at painful economic reforms which have driven millions of Russians below the poverty line.

Economic output has halved since the Soviet Union fell apart and there was no sign of the long-awaited turnaround in the first five months of 1996, when output was six percent below year-ago levels.

Yeltsin clawed his way into first place with 35 percent, and a senior aide hinted that a deal with fourth-placed liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky could not be ruled out.

"I don't exclude the possibility of some kind of union between the president of Russia and the leader of Yabloko, (Yavlinsky)," Georgy Satarov said.

Eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fyodorov, who won about 700,000 first-round votes, said he would back Yeltsin in the runoff, and Yeltsin clearly hopes Lebed's 11 million voters will follow the tough-talking general's lead and back Yeltsin in the runoff.

But Zyuganov made clear he also wanted to win Lebed's voters over to the communist camp.

"An electorate can't be inherited like serfs," he told a news conference. "We have to talk to

the Lebed electorate."

Ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who won almost six percent in the first-round, said his voters were not communists.

"Our supporters will vote as I tell them. All this stupidity that my electorate will go over to the communists is ruled out," Zhirinovskiy told a news conference.

RIA news agency said Lebed met top commanders yesterday to discuss possible changes. But new fighting just outside breakaway Chechnya gave an early reminder of the problems the new security chief will face.

Seven Russian soldiers were killed in an attack on their armored vehicle in Ingushetia, news reports said yesterday.

Rebel fighters hiding in a forest opened fire on an armored personnel carrier full of Russian soldiers that was traveling Tuesday night between two Ingush villages, the Interfax news agency reported.

The rebels using grenade launchers blasted the vehicle, killing several federal troops and wounding four others. The rebels slipped back into the forest, the report said.

The attack was one of several as fighting continued in Chechnya despite a truce signed last month between Russian and separatist leaders.

Chechen separatist rebels accused Russia's military Tuesday of attacking a village in violation of the truce.



Unionist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy gestures during a news conference yesterday. (Reuters)

Unionists slam Dublin for Sinn Fein ties

BELFAST (Reuters) - Pro-British Unionists attacked Dublin yesterday for failing to sever contacts with Sinn Fein in retaliation for a suspected IRA weekend bomb attack which cast a long shadow over Northern Ireland peace talks.

"I am very disappointed at the decision of the Irish Cabinet yesterday to maintain contact with Sinn Fein," said David Trimble, leader of the powerful Ulster Unionist Party (UUP).

"How can one have any illusions about this organization any longer after the bomb in Manchester and in view of the regular statements that are coming out from Sinn Fein-IRA," he said.

Trimble was reacting to the Irish government's decision to maintain contact with Sinn Fein while it sounds out its IRA allies on

prospects of a renewed truce. The weekend explosion on the British mainland, which injured more than 200, triggered renewed fears of a return to violence in Northern Ireland itself, where troops and police took to the streets again yesterday as a precautionary measure.

The attack, which has been blamed on Irish Republican Army units fighting British rule of the province, cast a pall over the resumption yesterday of Northern Ireland peace talks, from which Sinn Fein is excluded pending a new IRA truce.

It has raised tension in the province, which has been spared IRA violence in its latest campaign, because of widespread fears that the IRA's Protestant Loyalist foes might carry out an attack in retaliation for the

Manchester bomb. Ireland, Britain's partner in the talks, challenged Sinn Fein to seek an IRA truce but stopped short of isolating the IRA's political arm.

"Sinn Fein as a political party should make it very clear they do not support the armed struggle of the IRA," Foreign Minister Dick Spring told Irish radio.

"That's very important and should be done as quickly as possible. We need to have very explicit answers in relation to these matters," he said, before leaving Dublin to attend the peace talks.

They had got off to a turbulent start last Monday when Unionists objected to the chairmanship and powers of former US senator George Mitchell, as well as to the talks agenda.

Serb Assembly meets without Karadzic

PALE (AP) - The Bosnian Serb assembly, without Radovan Karadzic, met yesterday to determine its approach to negotiations over a vital strip of land and to approve a limited amnesty.

International officials are afraid the continued presence of the nationalist Karadzic, who has been indicted for war crimes, will make it difficult to hold elections and then stitch Bosnia back together.

Under NATO policy, troops enforcing peace in former Yugoslavia cannot actively pursue Karadzic and his military chief, Gen. Ratko Mladic, also indicted for war crimes, but can arrest them if they encounter them during regular duties.

Under the US-brokered Dayton peace agreement, the Serbs control 49 percent of Bosnia. A federation of Muslims and Croats have the other 51 percent.

The parliament of that federation met yesterday, but tensions between Muslims and Croats delayed passage of a defense law that is the key to beginning a US-sponsored program to equip and train the fed-

eral army. News reports from the Serb session in Pale indicated that two of Karadzic's deputies, Biljana Plavsic and Nikola Koljevic, were present. There was no mention of Karadzic, however; it could be risky for him to appear in such a public forum.

Plavsic, who shares Karadzic's extreme nationalist views, was named last month by the Bosnian Serb leader to represent him in contacts with the international community - a step aimed at easing pressure on Karadzic to step down.

The Bosnian Serb assembly was to focus on issues such as negotiations over the vital Brcko corridor in northern Bosnia, and an amnesty law.

The narrow corridor through the town is all that connects Serb holdings in northwest Bosnia with eastern Bosnia. Without it, Serb-held territory would be split between the northwest area around Banja Luka where moderates are based, and the eastern base of Karadzic and his more radical faction.

Greeks, Turks send warships to Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) - Greece and Turkey sent warships to war-divided Cyprus yesterday as tension mounted in the region following major Turkish naval exercises.

The Greek frigate *Ellis* docked at Limassol while four Turkish warships docked in ports north of the island.

Greek Cypriot Defense Minister Costas Eliades said after visiting the *Ellis* that a defense pact between Athens and Nicosia, signed in 1993, "makes possible the presence of Greek naval and air forces in Cyprus."

Black church fire was accidental

BERLIN, Maryland (AP) - An early-morning fire that heavily damaged a black church was quickly traced to an electrical problem, dispelling fears it was another of the arsonists' attacks that have caused nationwide anguish.

"Federal agents hurried to St. John's United Methodist Church in a rural black community. They planned a full arson investigation, state Fire Marshal Rocco J. Gabriele said, but 'it's quite evident it's accidental.'"

"Our preliminary investigation indicates it started in the kitchen. It appears it started in an electrical socket that they've been having problems with over the past couple of days," Gabriele said. The fire was reported about 2:45 a.m. and put out in 30 minutes.

The blaze damaged the church's white clapboard main sanctuary and destroyed an annex, leaving only cinder block walls, said firefighter Bennett Bowman. "The church was empty at the time and no injuries were reported."

"It was a beautiful place to worship," said Keith Purnell, 25, who has been a member of the church all of his life.

"All the members knew one another," he added. The fire came a day after an attempted arson at a white church in the same Mississippi community where nearly simultaneous blazes destroyed two black churches only a few miles apart.

Federal agencies are investigating dozens of suspicious fires that have struck black churches across the South and Southeast in the last 18 months.

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US to boycott business partners of Libya, Iran

HILLEL KUTTLER
WASHINGTON

THE US House of Representatives yesterday ganged up on two of its favorite whipping boys, voting yesterday by 415-0 to impose sanctions on foreign companies with substantial investment in Iran's oil industry or those providing oil technology to Libya.

The Senate has already passed a similar bill, and the two versions will soon be united and sent to the White House for President Clinton, as expected, to sign.

House international relations committee chairman Benjamin Gilman (Rep. NY) said on the floor Tuesday night that the bill is a "vital element in the administration's policy of containing Iran and Libya."

"We're calling on other nations now to curtail any efforts to refinance Iran's mounting bilateral debts, to end its supply of arms and technology to Iran and Libya and we strongly urge Russia to stop its work on Iran's nuclear reactor," he said.

Companies investing over \$40 million annually in Iran's oil industry are liable for a variety of economic sanctions should they also continue doing business with American firms.

Also yesterday, Congressman Elliot Engel (Dem. NY) introduced a resolution that "demands" that Syria "immediately declare its commitment to completely withdraw" its army from Lebanon and to execute the withdrawal by the end of 1997. The resolution says the two houses of Congress will not accept Damascus' hegemony over Lebanon, and rejects linking Syria's presence there to a negotiated settlement with Israel.

It also calls on the Secretary of State to report to Congress every six months on progress toward Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon. The resolution had been scheduled to be introduced in April but was delayed because of the fighting in Lebanon.

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אברהם ליבס

Waiting for the High Holy Days

FLAIR
GREER FAY CASHMAN

Is it too early to start thinking about Rosh Hashana? The rabbi would tell us that it's never too early to start thinking of the High Holy Days, but at a more mundane level - namely what one is going to wear to synagogue, this is about the right time to start thinking, but just a little too early to be buying.

Many stores have already started advertising summer sales, but prices are still significantly high for the sales season. However it is a good time to go window shopping to see what's still available and to take note of the cost of the items that appeal to you. If something in a boutique catches your fancy, grab it now, because the chances are that it won't be there when you come back in a few weeks' time.

It's also quite probable that whatever appeals to you in a chain store may disappear within the next week, but if you've written down the name of the manufacturer, the style number and the color, and you ask the sales attendant or the store manager to run a trace, it's possible that another branch will have just what you're looking for at a price of up to 50% less than the one currently listed.

Many tourists who come to Israel for the High Holy Days parade in the latest fall/winter couture creations coming off the runways of Paris, London, Milan, New York and Buenos Aires, only to swelter in the Israeli heat. It's a bit difficult to look elegant with perspiration running down one's face.

Those of us who live here know that September in Israel is usually a very hot month. Rosh Hashana attire should therefore be as lightweight as possible - but that doesn't mean that it can't be formal or festive.

A simple classic dress or suit - especially in colors such as black, white or beige, which never go out of style - is the perfect foil for a gorgeous hat replete with feathers, flowers and ribbons. It's a fairly safe bet that toward the end of July, you will be able to pick up a very smart outfit for under NIS 500.

If there's a store at which you shop regularly, you may be able to come to an arrangement with the proprietor whereby you leave a small deposit on something currently in stock on the understanding that the price will be reduced when the summer sale comes into full force, at which time you'll take possession of your new acquisition.

At this time of the year, it really is folly to pay full price for summer merchandise, but it's definitely worth taking an inventory of what's on the racks. Sometimes you can come across beautiful pieces by famous-name designers which are being discarded for less than the wholesale cost of the fabric. But even if you can't find top labels at rock-bottom prices, you certainly can find them at easily affordable prices - so now's the time to look.



Claude Montana's fashions are certain to be on the list of savvy shoppers in the coming season.

Tourism Ministry reports tour operators have reformed

CAVEAT EMPTORI
RUTHIE BLUM

MORE than six months ago, my attention was called to a barrage of complaints against Mazada Tours, a frequent advertiser in this newspaper. "How can your paper entice people to travel to Jordan with an agency so abominable to tourists?" was the gist of many letters I received.

The Ministry of Tourism was also bombarded with complaints against Mazada, ranging from bad service, false itineraries, and rude employees, to the behavior of Ze'ev Raphael, the company's general manager.

Raphael remained adamant in his claim that all mishaps related to Jordanian excursions were the fault of the Jordanians - as yet inexperienced in the tourism industry - proof of which, he insisted, lay in the success of Mazada tours to other Middle Eastern countries.

At the time, the Ministry of Tourism was not convinced by this claim. After thorough investigation, and repeated reprimands to Raphael, the ministry decided to revoke Mazada's license. Ministry spokeswoman Orly Doroo said that a press release to this effect would be circulated in the near future.

As the "near future" came and went, however, the only items circulated in the press were additional ads for Mazada Tours.

Then a disappointed D.K. of London sent me a similar complaint against Galilee Tours, also involving a trip to Jordan. In the cover letter to a thick packet of correspondence between the tour's dissatisfied patrons, the company, and the Ministry of Tourism, D.K. wrote: "My principal concern is that I feel humiliated by the ministry who have simply not addressed the complaint. My instinct at my meeting with Galilee - that they felt well protected

the ministry - has not been dispelled... [I feel that] it would be a waste of time to pursue [the matter] further..."

TOURISM MINISTRY deputy director-general Shabtai Shai denied not taking consumer complaints seriously. "However," he stressed, "we do not automatically side against a company in favor of a customer."

According to Shai, even when a complaint is considered by the ministry to be justified, it is not necessarily enough to lead to the revocation of a license. He cited the series of health scares caused by the Tnuva factory as an example of the difficulty involved in a government ministry putting people out of work, while pointing to the many branches and staff members employed by Mazada.

"In the case of Mazada Tours," he continued, "we originally came to the conclusion that its license had to be rescinded on the basis of an inordinate number of violations. But in the meantime, the company has turned over a new leaf."

Shai insists that ministry supervision and intervention have brought about a genuine change in Mazada's service. "In the past three months, we have ceased receiving complaints against Mazada, and anyone to whom compensation was owed has been reimbursed."

Likewise with Galilee Tours, according to Shai. Although unfamiliar with the specifics of the complaint submitted by D.K., Shai was aware of difficulties with Galilee Tours in the past. This company, too, he says, has been com-

pletely transformed. Where does this leave disappointed travelers?

The first principle is to rely on word of mouth before selecting a tour company. One personal recommendation is worth a thousand ads.

Secondly, when traveling to Jordan, do not assume that the accommodation will in any way resemble that of other countries - including those in the Middle East. Schedules are likely to be off, border entry and exit is time-consuming and inefficient. Buses are dilapidated, and Jordanian guides may be non-English speakers who are not well-versed in the tourist sites. Though the Israeli group leader required to accompany you should be able to fill in these gaps, his or her ability to do so may be hindered by the Jordanian guide.

In the event that you do have a complaint about a tour - be it local or foreign - submit it in writing to the tour company with which you traveled. If you fail to get satisfaction, submit your written complaint to: Ya'acov Mashiah, Control Division, the Ministry of Tourism, 24 King George Street, Jerusalem.

If you have booked a tour from abroad, you are better off submitting a complaint directly to the agency office there. Rules of conduct regarding tour groups are stricter in the US and Europe (according to Shai), and compensation is likely to be more easily forthcoming from that end. Bon voyage...

You are invited to offer personal stories about goods and services in this country. Write to: Ruthie Blum, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem.

About-turn on margarine and mayo

MARGARINE and mayonnaise have long been out of dietary favor. But recently the two foods have been linked to lower rates of heart disease.

A study by researchers led by epidemiologist Lawrence H. Kushi of the University of Minnesota began with a questionnaire answered in 1986 by 34,486 postmenopausal women who did not have cardiovascular disease. Seven years later the health records of the women were compared with the responses they had given to the questions about their eating patterns.

The researchers concluded that the amount of vitamin A and C the women consumed had no effect on their risk of fatal coronary heart disease. They did conclude, however, that there was an inverse relationship between the consumption of certain foods - nuts and seeds; margarine; and mayonnaise or creamy salad dressing - and heart disease. Women who said they ate a tablespoon each of margarine or four or more servings a month of nuts had about 60 percent as many heart-disease deaths as those who said they ate none. Those who said they had two or more servings a week of mayo or creamy dressing had about half as many such deaths as those who ate none.

All these foods are high in fat and in vitamin E. Through further statistical examination, the research team concluded that the healthful element in these foods was the vitamin E.

C. Wayne Callaway, a George Washington University endocrinologist, said other interpretations of the results were possible. First, the relationship could be a statistical fluke. Or the results could be caused by a "threshold effect," meaning a certain minimal amount of vitamin E might be good while additional amounts do nothing. Finally, he said, "the dietary intake of vitamin E could simply be a co-variable, something that's associated with a healthy lifestyle rather than something that's beneficial."

Margo Wootan, senior scientist at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, laid down a basic rule: "You always need to put one study in the context of all the existing evidence. And there's very good consensus that consumers should limit their intake of total fat and especially saturated fat." The fat in vegetables, and thus in margarine and mayonnaise, is mostly unsaturated; animal fat, as in meat and butter, is primarily saturated fat.

"I think most [health organizations] would agree that mayonnaise and margarine are foods that people should eat [only] moderate amounts of," Wootan continued.

The study hardly proves that you should eat more margarine and mayonnaise, Callaway said, but consumed in moderation they're nothing to worry about. "Stop the good-food, bad-food nonsense and start talking about the overall diet... Eat fruits and vegetables, eat a variety of foods and exercise." (Washington Post)

Want to feel really young? Collect Barbie dolls

THE woman in the pink satin jacket with "Barbie Loves Ken" printed on the back walked past the security guards, through the doors of a Philadelphia hotel ballroom and into her own personal nirvana.

The room was an explosion of pink. Thousands of Barbie dolls, Barbie shoes, Barbie prom dresses and Barbie purses were stacked on racks. And admiring it all were 800 fans of the 29-cm doll.

At the 1996 National Barbie Doll Collector Convention, the little dolls are big business. "She's an American icon," said dealer Marl Davidson of Bradenton, Florida, as she held an original 1959 Barbie, complete with black-and-white diagonally striped bathing suit and a \$7,350 price tag. "Barbie is an important part of our history and who we are."

The dolls, both older and newer models, were everywhere. Golf Date Barbie, Easter Party Barbie, Baseball Barbie. The more refined Very Violet Barbie promised "elegant evenings of dance and romance."

While many collectors concentrate on whole dolls, a large segment of the hobby is devoted to completing outfit sets. Collectors are passionate about searching out that missing piece.

"Found it!" exclaimed Judy Bester of Willowick, Ohio, as she snagged a tiny bag holding an even smaller road map. At \$10, the road map from Mattel Inc. was about three times as expensive as the real thing. "It's for the 'Open Road' outfit," Bester, 37, explained. "I have everything but the map, so she couldn't drive without getting lost."

Bester said she was just out for "the little stuff," a deceiving description since some of the small items can cost more than a

doll. "I saw two bouquets of flowers for the Beautiful Bride and Campus Sweetheart sets that were \$500 each," she said. "It's supply and demand."

Barbie's blond surfer-type boyfriend, Ken, can be found at the convention, but many collectors give him the run.

"He's just an arm piece," said Laura Lieberman, 26, of Leesburg, Virginia. "All my Kens are naked and thrown in a bag in the back."

One Ken was attracting attention, but enthusiasts had to peek under a piece of paper to see why. The doll, costing \$350, was anatomically correct in exaggerated proportion thanks to some extra plastic, a soldering iron and some mischievous Mattel employees about 20 years ago.

While the Ken-collecting segment may be small, an estimated 20 percent of Barbie enthusiasts are men. To Mattel, Barbie represents dollar signs. The company sold \$1.4 billion-worth of Barbie-related merchandise in 1995, up from \$430 million in 1987.

"The majority [of sales] is still for little girls, but the fastest growing market is the collectibles," said Mattel spokeswoman Lisa McKendall.

John Marton of Kailua, Hawaii, puts up nearly 4,000 Barbie dolls that his wife, Florence, displays at a private museum she operates at their home.

"They're hanging on the ceiling; they're everywhere," he said, rolling his eyes in mock disgust.

A Mrs. Marton, a collector for 27 years, said: "At a show in Birmingham [Alabama], I spent \$10,000. I just keep adding and adding. Collecting them makes me feel young." (AP)



Barbie dolls, like this life-sized wonder, have always been fun for kids, but now lots of fully-grown adults can't get enough of them, either.

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Reconstructing mass destruction

THE Iraqi dictatorship this week accused the United Nations Special Commission investigating its shady arms race of being in collusion with Western powers in a conspiracy to topple President Saddam Hussein. The government accused Rolf Ekeus's inspection team of being "spies" who had "ill intentions" and who harbored "dubious political aims."

One can only wish that this latest piece of mendacious Iraqi propaganda were true. A united Western front trying to topple Saddam and his machinery of death is, to quote Hamlet, a consummation devoutly to be wished, but one less devoutly mocked by realities.

Every day, a study of the world's more minor news reports reveals a picture of Western states falling over one another in the greedy scramble to line their coffers with Iraqi money again, now that the renegade state is being allowed to sell some oil. The path of those who believe in trade-at-any-price is being featherbedded by a gaggle of international do-gooders bleating endlessly about the "sufferings of the Iraqi people," which should be searing the conscience of the world.

Heaven forbid that it might be searing the conscience of the brutal clique, headed by Saddam, that has turned a country wealthy in oil, water, fertile landscapes, and a once enterprising merchant people into a poverty-stricken and disease-ridden Third World pariah.

France was the first to elbow its way into Baghdad in search of a commercial toehold, long before the UN eased oil restrictions. Germany, too, has been hot on the trail of restored influence in the country, to which it not long ago sold some of the chemical and other technology Ekeus and his team have been hunting down for five years.

This week no less than 27 Spanish companies are holding a trade exhibition in Baghdad, in

search of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of contracts. And Spain is only the latest to join the army of businessmen winging their way into Iraq from Europe, Asia, and even Arab countries with the glint of petrodollar signs in their eyes.

The director-general of just one Spanish water-pump firm said he sees the possibility of \$200 million in sales from the Baghdad exhibition. The Iraqi businessman in Madrid who arranged the commercial carnival said the UN oil-for-food deal is only a drop in the ocean of business he hopes such ventures will generate.

The rush to business has meant that not a single country in the UN has suggested that the oil-for-food deal should be reviewed after Saddam's brazen confrontation with the UN inspection team last week. Iraq refused 54 arms inspectors access to three key sites Ekeus believed to be harboring banned weapons, despite a Security Council directive to open them. Ekeus eventually withdrew since he knew the suspect materials had been moved during the standoff.

Ekeus has emerged as the first true hero of the United Nations in his relentless and defiant zeal to put real teeth into UN resolutions against an outlaw state. Now all his sterling work is being undermined by greedy governments. Seeing the inspection teams stabbed in the back by those mandating them will encourage Saddam to more defiance.

Iraq's people will continue to starve, but some way will be found to divert the flood of dollars back to the mothballed mass destruction industry. So let no one be surprised when the Middle East finds itself back where it started, blackmailed by an Iraq or Iran which once more have been bankrolled by the never-have-enoughs of European business, with the blessing of their blinkered governments.

Sarraj's confession

COMPARING Amnesty International's report on Israel to its report on the Palestinian Authority is like comparing jay walking to murder. Israel subjects suspected terrorists to prolonged sleep deprivations and shaking, while the PA routinely uses torture, extrajudicial murders, kneecapping (crippling by shooting kneecaps), electric shocks, beatings with cables, kidnappings, and bogus trials against human rights activists, journalists, and critics of the regime.

The most celebrated recent case of PA abuse was the arrest and torture of Dr. Iyad Sarraj, a human rights activist who for a dozen years has been the darling of Israel's "peace camp" establishment. What got him into trouble was a *New York Times* column by Anthony Lewis, one of the most ardent advocates of Israeli withdrawal from the territories and a promoter of a PLO state. Expressing disappointment bordering on desperation, Sarraj told Lewis that life under the Israeli occupation had been 100 times freer than under Yasser Arafat's PA.

Soon after the article was published, Sarraj was thrown in jail for "slandering the PA." Released under international pressure, he was arrested again on obviously fake drug charges. From jail he managed to smuggle a note to his family complaining of beatings and stating that his life was in danger.

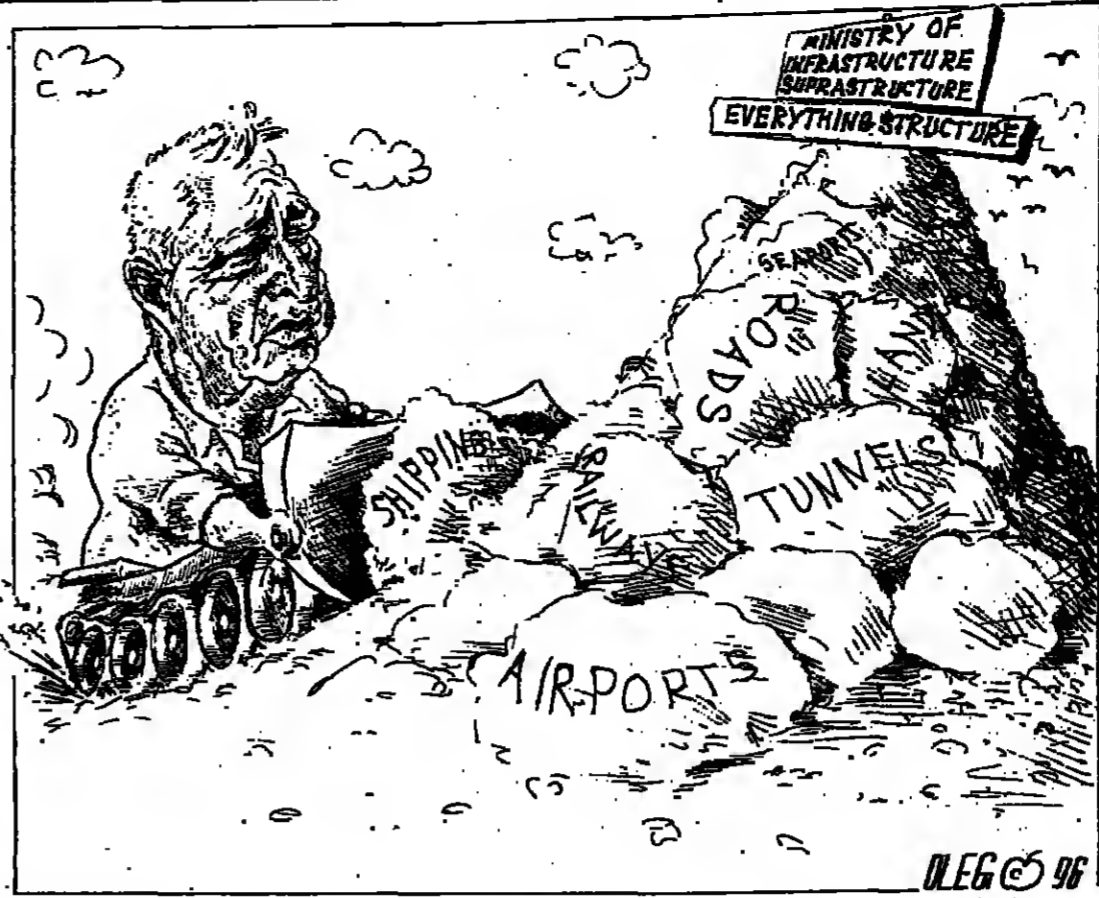
Some of his Israeli friends have been quick to come to his defense. They describe him as an

educated, cultured, and truly liberal Palestinian with a record of opposition to violence, who represents hope for a better future. But in a letter of apology to Arafat which he was forced to write from jail, Sarraj not only insists, in the tradition of contrite Soviet prisoners, that he meant no personal criticism of the rais.

He enumerates all the things he had done under the "occupation," which should have allayed any suspicions of disloyalty. After all, he said, didn't I transfer millions to the Fatah and Fatah Hawks? Wasn't my home used as a safe house for them when we fought the Israelis? Didn't I extend shelter and medical treatment to the wounded fighters of the Fatah Hawks?

The Fatah Hawks, it should be noted, were the frontline terrorists of those days, who were cited in Tuesday's Amnesty report as today's hit squads. "Extrajudicial punishment such as kneecapping were reportedly carried out by members of the Palestinian security services... and by members of groups allied to the PLO, such as the Fatah Hawks," says the report. Under Israeli rule, then, Sarraj was not a paragon of non-violence, but an active participant in the armed struggle. Yet even he felt "100 times freer" under Israeli rule.

If his story does not give the peace camp pangs of conscience about their role in relegating the Palestinian people to life in a police state, nothing will.



Turkish delight

URI DAN
DENNIS EISENBERG

VIVID media accounts of recent bomb blasts rocking Syria give the impression that President Assad is facing trouble at home. The British media carried reports of a car bomb aimed at Assad.

But after the *New York Times* ran Thomas Friedman's spy-story version of Syrian goings-on, it became clear that something really fishy was afoot, perhaps even the spreading of misinformation. For when Friedman writes about the Middle East he invariably gets hold of the wrong end of the stick.

True, there were bombs in Syria. And one did go off near the Damascus apartment of Abdullah Ocalan, head of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), who works for both Syria and Iran to undermine the Turkish government.

Yet to conclude that Assad was the target of those bombs is misleading. His reign of terror is so rigorously enforced that a revolt against his regime is just wishful thinking.

So what was behind the sudden reports of bombs aimed at blowing up Assad's regime? A clue: The information originated in the State Department.

US officialdom has been selling Assad the bomb-again peace lover for all it's worth. All Assad wanted was the Golan Heights and a paltry strip of fishing rights on the Kinneret. In return he would sign a paper with the word peace written on it.

Pictures of Peres, Assad and Clinton shaking hands on the White House lawn would have looked great on TV just before the US presidential elections. All that was needed was Peres's re-election as prime minister.

Never mind that Assad has never honored a single treaty with any neighbor. Or that Damascus, hand-in-hand with the fanatical fundamentalists of Iran, acts as conduit and launching pad for terrorist movements like Hamas in Israel and Hizbullah in Lebanon, for Kurdish-sponsored bomb outrages in Turkey, and murderous attacks on opponents in Europe and elsewhere.

So why the sudden story about Assad being a target of bombs in Syria? Says a leading Syrian expert on Assad: "The US administration is hopping mad with Assad. If only he had helped Peres by making a tiny gesture toward Israel showing that he really was a man of peace - or had at least stopped Hizbullah picking off Israeli soldiers in Lebanon like sitting ducks. The US administration is convinced that the major reason for Netanyahu's victory was

Israeli suspicion regarding Assad's real intentions.

Nor have the humiliations Assad inflicted upon Warren Christopher during his endless shuttling to and from Damascus been forgiven or forgotten.

In short, Washington's belief is that Assad was directly responsible for Peres's downfall, despite all Clinton could do to help him

As Israel savors the sweet taste of strengthening ties with Ankara Washington learns the bitter truth about Assad

Hizbullah and other Iranian-supported terror groups, so he is working to undermine his Turkish neighbor. The PKK terrorist group was trained in the Bekaa Valley by the same Iranian commanders who instruct Hamas and Hizbullah bomb specialists on how to blow up civilians in Turkey as they do in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and other Israeli cities.

Common sense dictates that Israel and Turkey are natural allies in holding back the growing wave of Iranian-Syrian war by bomb and knife reaching westward from their borders.

What has been forgotten is that this alliance was pushed secretly by the US as a natural barrier against Middle Eastern anti-Western despots nearly 40 years ago. It was designed to create a bulwark not only against Arab dictators, but also against the Soviet Union's fast-developing penetration of the Middle East.

In the 1950s there was a secret meeting aboard a luxurious yacht in the Marmara Sea between Israeli chief of staff Haim Laskov, top officers like Avraham Yarkni, and their Turkish counterparts. There were also strong links between the pro-Western Shah of Persia and Israel - destroyed by Jimmy Carter, who sacrificed the Shah on the altar of "human rights," bringing Ayatollah Khomeini to power in Teheran. The consequences of this diplomatic stroke of genius are too well known.

The penny, it appears, has finally dropped in Washington, particularly in the State Department, that Turkey and Israel face the same enemy that threatens the whole Western world, hell-bent on spreading mayhem in Buenos Aires, New York, Europe, and the Middle East, agitating not only against Israel, but even against the "wrong" sort of Moslem regimes like those of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.

Western oil supplies may yet be in jeopardy. As Iraq snubs the UN with growing self-confidence, the realization is at last dawning in Washington that there is no difference between Iranian ayatollahs, Saddam Hussein of Iraq, and Assad of Syria. Hence the discreet pat on the back for Israeli and Turkish pilots flying side by side in US-made planes, and joint naval exercises.

Little wonder Assad is suddenly nervous. No fool, he has just despatched 40,000 troops to the Turkish border.

The writers are authors of *The Mossad: Secrets of the Israeli Secret Service and other books on the Middle East*.

POSTSCRIPTS

AFTER 17 years in hiding, millions of tiny creatures with bulging orange eyes are digging their way out of the ground from Connecticut to North Carolina.

The 17-year cicadas are back. The 3.8 cm-long black bugs with iridescent wings have the longest lifespan of any insect but only live above ground as adults for 2 1/2 weeks before they die. This group was last sighted in 1979; other populations appear in different years.

"There is nothing else to approach that in the entire entomological world," Yale University entomologist Charles Remington said while surveying the return of the bugs. "They'll all be dead by the end of June."

Found only in the US east of the Great Plains, 17-year periodical cicadas tunnel into the ground after hatching, some digging as deeply as 2 1/2 meters. Beneath the surface, the nymphs slowly suck the sap from tree roots for nourishment.

After 17 years, they burrow to

the surface and climb trees and shrubs. They never eat while above ground; they are too busy reproducing.

The adult males begin the mating ritual by emitting a whining song that attracts the females. The chorus from one colony's males is so loud it can drown out the sound of a lawn mower.

Their emergence will be a boon for birds, which often gorge on the creatures that Remington describes as "the tastiest insects in the world."

AIR NEW ZEALAND pilots on international flights have been granted permission to nap in the cockpit, starting even the pilots' union.

It was "better to have one pilot asleep during a period of low activity than to have both asleep..." the airline said in a memo to staff.

Pilots will be allowed a 30-minute nap for flights to destinations further afield than Australia.

WHILE MIKHAIL Gorbachev was pushing ahead with his bid for the Russian presidency, his wife seems to have given up hope of a return to the political limelight.

Raisa Gorbachev has been selling off her evening dresses to Moscow second-hand stores because she no longer needs them.

"It doesn't even occur to many Moscow residents that they're wearing Raisa Gorbachev's evening dresses," a Russian newspaper report said.

Raisa was the first Soviet first lady to come out of her husband's shadow, and she became well-known at home and abroad for her stylish, expensive outfits. But she was derided by many Russians as being haughty, pretentious and overdressed.

Now she insists her flashy clothes weren't products of personal whim but a state necessity. She said Nancy Reagan was especially demanding in her dress code for White House receptions.

Hail the NRP

LARRY DERFNER

FOR all the National Religious Party's promises to turn Israeli youth onto Judaism, you would hardly know the NRP had played such a big role in turning them off in the first place.

Our new education minister is NRP leader Zevulun Hammer. This is not his first time in the job. He was education minister from 1977-84, and from 1990-92.

For nine of the last 19 years, Hammer and his party have controlled the Israeli public school system.

Now they tell us that Israeli secular youth are cut off from their Jewish roots. These kids don't know anything about Judaism, they don't care anything about Judaism. They're being swallowed up by MTV, losing their Jewish souls.

The problem, says Hammer, is lack of Jewish education in the public secular schools, where about two-thirds of Israeli pupils study. The NRP, he vows, will fix things. It will expose these lost, aimless youngsters to the beauty of the Jewish religion, the Jewish people, the Land of Israel, etc. - and not by forcing it down their throats, but by inspiring them.

Well, what has the NRP been doing until now?

They've been running the schools for half of the last generation, secular Israeli youth are now alienated or hostile to all things Jewish, and the NRP leaders didn't have anything to do with it?

Not in their eyes. They campaigned as reformers. They aimed their message at secular voters, at Jews who are afraid their children are growing up to be "Hebrew-speaking gentiles."

Judging by how well the party did in the Knesset elections, the campaign worked. A great many secular Israelis voted NRP. The party is now widely seen as a kind of domestic "light unto the nations," and the new savior of Jewish youth.

INCIDENTALLY, this concern over the bankruptcy of Jewish education in the public schools didn't start with the NRP's election campaign.

During his last term as minister, Hammer appointed a panel of educators to look into the problem and come up with ways to solve it. The appointment of the Shenhar Committee must be one of his deepest regrets.

In August 1994, after Hammer had left the ministry, the committee published its findings. They made headlines. The failure of public Jewish education for the first time became a national issue. The alienation felt by secular pupils was beginning to be understood. Prof. Aliza Shenhar, then rector of Haifa University, now

The savior of our secular kids' Jewish souls? Don't bet on it

ambassador to Russia, said: "We must break the religious monopoly on Jewish education. The training of teachers of Judaism is carried out almost exclusively by religious institutions. Religious teachers deepen the alienation of secular pupils from Jewish studies. Lesson plans in Judaism are not relevant to the world of secular pupils and arouse their hatred to Jewish studies."

The Orthodox brand of Jewish education, championed by the NRP and Israel's other religious powers, was rote and dogmatic.

It offered secular students one view of Judaism alone - the Orthodox view - and students responded by tuning out, the committee found.

The thing to do, the panel recommended, was open up Jewish education to different, more critical, more interesting approaches.

A year later a successor to Hammer at the Education Ministry, Meretz's Amnon Rubinstein, gave Conservative, Reform, humanistic and liberal Orthodox institutions their first opportunity to train Jewish studies teachers and prepare curricula.

Rubinstein didn't kick the Orthodox out of the public schools, not by any means; he just gave the non-Orthodox a toe-hold. But this was too much for the NRP.

Zvulun Orlev, previously Hammer's director-general in the education ministry, said these "weak, small-fry" Jewish denominations had no future in the secular schools. "They won't succeed in destroying our youth," he said. "We hope that after the elections... we will correct this."

Now the NRP will have its chance. Orthodox hegemony over the Jewish education of two-thirds of Israeli students is on its way back. No doubt the boys and girls are looking forward to Jewish studies as much as ever.

The writer is a journalist living in Tel Aviv.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SLEEPING EASIER

Sir, - I must admit that I never would have believed in having anything in common with Larry Derfner ("In a funk," June 6) other than being born in the US. But in this age of miracles, I see anything is possible.

The "feeling like somebody died" and the "ripple in my stomach" that Larry describes is the feeling I have been living with since the Oslo accords. When Larry describes his friends, "gut feeling like my life was in danger," he describes something that hundreds of thousands of Jews have been feeling for four years.

Israel was declared a Jewish state in 1947 by the UN. A Jewish majority of over 10 percent elected Mr. Netanyahu prime minister. After the elections, I am sleeping much easier, an act that in my stomach is slowly disintegrating.

SUSAN LEIBOWITZ

Efrat.

ILLEGAL

Sir, - Isn't handing out amulets tantamount to buying votes? Isn't cursing those who don't vote for your party tantamount to intimidation?

Isn't buying votes and intimidation illegal? Therefore, shouldn't the mandates acquired by Shas be declared null and void?

P. CARMEL

Hod Hasharon.

CONGRATULATIONS

Sir, - I wish to congratulate the people of Israel for a fair and free election. The people have spoken and it is now up to its leaders to carry on the wishes of the people. I congratulate the new prime minister of your country and wish him success in the pursuit of peace and security.

While I am not Jewish, I also know what it is like to live in fear of life and freedom.

To those of you who are disappointed in the election's results, do not believe that this is the end of the world. You live in a democratic country, your voices will be heard, and if your arguments are persuasive, you may still influence policy.

RAY MAGASHAZZY

Hollywood, Florida.

INTELLIGENT EDITORIAL

Sir, - Congratulations on your intelligent editorial of June 6. As we do live in the Jewish State, we hope to return to some of the traditions and practices of the Jewish people. In the schools our children should be given the knowledge and the background and the reasons why we are living here - they will then have the incentive to serve our country and be good citizens of the state.

ROSE SHULMAN, DOREEN FEINGOLD

Haifa.

PEACE WILL HAVE TO WAIT

Sir, - Your excellent editorial, "Wanted: Realism" (May 31), draws a true and comprehensive picture of the real Middle East. But why not draw any conclusions? It is not enough to say: "If a Netanyahu government begins to acknowledge these brutal facts, it will make a giant step towards providing a realistic prescription for the life in the real Middle East." Why not spell out what this giant step is?

The only way to real peace is not to abandon Israel's vital interests for the sake of an immediate easy solution. Objectively, with Damascus within the range of Israel's artillery, Syria should be at least as much interested in peace - even without the Golan - as Israel is. Assad may never agree, but history does not end with Assad. Israel has waited almost half a century for peace, so it may have to wait another half a century.

The same principle applies to the Palestinians. Israel should never agree to the division of Jerusalem, to the Palestinian state and to the return of the refugees from the 1948 war. Israel's sovereignty should be extended to the Jewish settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza and the final agreement should maintain the areas B and C with minor corrections. Again, Arafat may never agree, so peace will have to wait.

DR. JACOB ROSIN

Netanya.

Handwritten signature or stamp at the bottom of the page.

LA AIDS sufferers find solace in 'Jewish penicillin'

BARRY CHERIN
LOS ANGELES

EVERY other Sunday at dawn, a team of devoted volunteers assembles at the Fairfax Kitchon of the Los Angeles Jewish AIDS Service to take part in "Project Chicken Soup."

There, they prepare hundreds of roasts chickens, multiple pans of deserts, large vats of vegetables, loaves of *halla* and giant cauldrons of the legendary Jewish staple for all ills - chicken soup. More than 100 liters of chicken soup are delivered along with the meals, household supplies and medication to people with AIDS and their families every other Sunday throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

Jewish AIDS Services (JAS) started in 1986 and came under the auspices of Jewish Family Services in 1989. The spread of AIDS caused the organization to grow to its present size of 200 volunteers and a paid staff of four headed by Rabbi Raphael Goldstein. The list of clients numbers about 120.

"We had no problem in getting the Jewish community to cooperate with us," says Rabbi Goldstein, author of *Being a Blessing: 54 Ways You Can Help People With AIDS*.

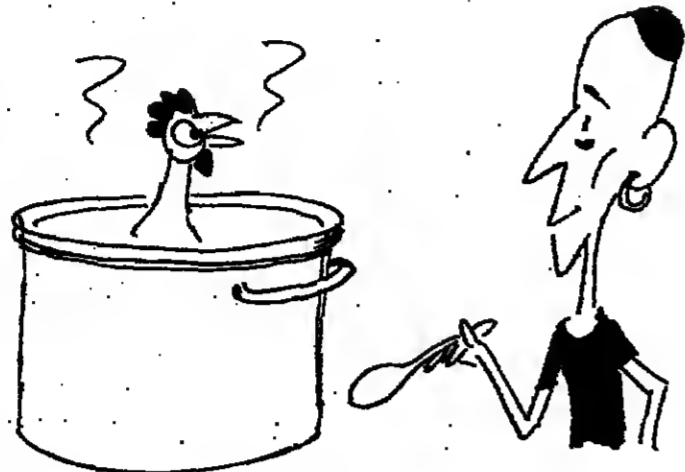
"AIDS has touched everyone's lives. We serve the needs of people living with AIDS as well as their families and friends.

Goldstein takes great pride in the final product of his "Chicken Soup" brigade. The meals arrive hot and are accompanied by flowers.

"We provide food not just for the stomach but for the soul, too. We meet the Jewish response to AIDS."

Goldstein says that "in times of crisis, people often turn back to their roots for support. As Jews, we are obligated to take care of those among us who are ill or poor. This is the best thing we can do with our lives."

Stephanie Sabar, the organiza-



HEIR RONNEN © 96

tion's licensed clinical social worker, visits clients regularly and believes that the growing popularity of JAS is because of its very personal touch.

"We emanate a 'mom and pop' feeling. We take a big personal interest in our clients."

The people most impressed with the work of JAS are the clients themselves. For Michael Lutchansky, who is symptomatic, JAS proved to be a big blessing.

"As a boy I was involved in the synagogue and now I feel that I've returned to my roots," he says. "Jewish AIDS Services gave me a will to live when I'd given up. If I need help, they are there. When I didn't have one Passover Seder to attend, they got me invited to five."

"I felt so lost, alone and deserted when I learned about my AIDS. JAS came into my life and it was a Godsend," he says.

"The first activity I took advantage of was 'Project Chicken Soup.' It's terrific. A lovely person shows up every other week with a great meal. And they don't just deliver and run away; they sit and talk to me.

"Recently, I attended the Camp

Tikvah Retreat and that was an incredibly fulfilling spiritual experience.

Rabbi Goldstein's point about "returning to one's roots" probably best explains the success of Jewish AIDS Services.

"Perhaps while struggling for breath and to keep food down, some suffering young man turns off hard rock music and lets his mind drift back to the high holiday and Friday night chanting he heard while attending the synagogue as a boy.

"His religion, that wonderful place of inspiration and security, offers a way for him and his family to get through the hardest time of their lives."

In the face of America's AIDS crisis, the Los Angeles Jewish AIDS Service is an oddity because nothing quite like it exists in other American cities with large gay Jewish populations, such as New York, Boston, Miami and Philadelphia.

Goldstein hopes to encourage other cities to establish similar organizations when he leads the first Jewish AIDS Network Conference in Washington DC on October 10.

Onward Christian soldiers

Exactly 900 years after their first army left Europe, the legacy of the Crusaders lives on

LED by an enigmatic man known as Peter the Hermit, an army of 20,000 peasants marched across Europe 900 years ago with the goal of recapturing the holy places of Christianity from the Moslems.

Peter's band was decimated well short of Jerusalem. But his quest began the Crusades, nearly 200 years of war that left the Middle East with a string of magnificent castles and a legacy of bitterness that lives on today.

Moslem militants preach against modern "crusaders" in their vision of a new Western assault on Islam. Palestinians curse Israelis as "crusaders" in the hope that the Jewish state eventually will disappear like the Christian kingdoms of the Holy Land. And to Jews the Crusades remain an example of murderous antisemitism.

To many Westerners, the Crusades are something for the history books. But in the Arab Middle East, they remain very much alive, a symbol of European encroachment that still evokes suspicion and comparisons to present events.

This year, three Arab countries - Egypt, Syria and Libya - are producing movies on Saladin, the Moslem conqueror of the Crusaders. Arabs often talk of finding "a new Saladin" to unify their squabbling nations and return Islam to a great age.

At the time of the Crusades, the Arab world was the modern world that gave new knowledge to the European invaders.

Arabs were far advanced in medicine and mathematics, and they had preserved ancient Greek thought while it disappeared in Europe's Dark Ages.

The Crusaders also took home more mundane things that are now part of Western life, among them apricots, scallions and sugar, which replaced honey as Europe's sweetener.

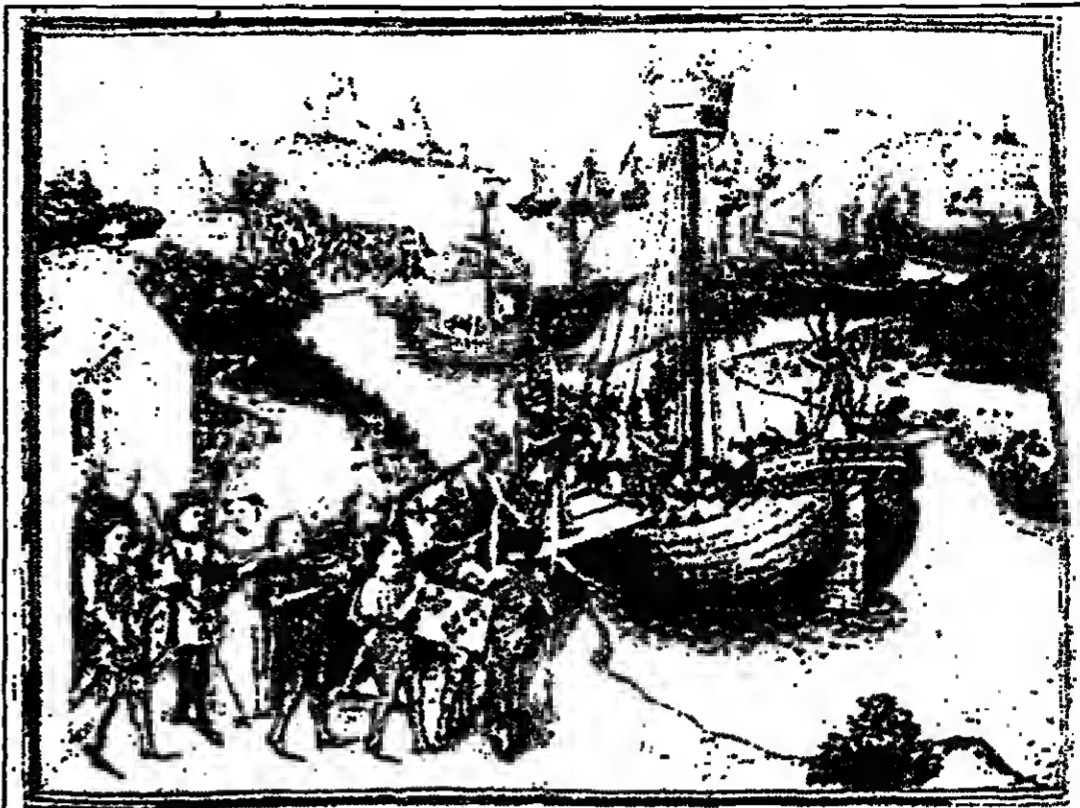
Sugar's name is from the Arabic *sukkar*, "scallion" derives from the Philistine city of Ascalon, "now Ashkelon.

Today, the traffic is in the other direction. The new Western crusaders are seen as bringing in their values, rather than spilling away knowledge or goods. Many Arabs - especially Islamic militants - fear that imports of blue jeans, rock music and Western ways of thinking are destroying Moslem and Arab traditions.

HUSSEIN AHMED Amin, an Egyptian diplomat who has studied Arab views of the Crusades, said that because history is "very much alive" for Arabs, they easily see parallels to today's world.

For example, he said, even the anti-terrorism summit of world leaders in Sbaron e-Beik in March raised fears of a "new crusade," abetted by some Mideast leaders, under the guise of fighting extremist Moslems.

"If you look more closely, it can seem as though it's not just against



An illustration from a medieval chronicle in Leningrad's Hermitage depicts Saint Louis departing from southern France to North Africa. The king and his army had planned to capture North Africa from the Moslems, but he died of plague upon reaching its shores.

Islamic fundamentalism but against Islam as a religion," Amin said.

Rashid Khalidi, director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Chicago, said the Arabs' deep feelings about the Crusades arise because of the parallel with Israel. In both cases, he suggests, Europeans fought to create a state in Arab lands.

He said the Crusades have a second resonance for the Arabs because they fall in with their historical view of "past greatness contrasted with the weakness of today. The Crusades...provoked and gave rise to the establishment of a large state by Saladin," Khalidi said. "For many Arab nationalists and many Islamists, this is a sort of ideal to which they look back fondly."

Karen Armstrong, a British writer on religion, said extremists who reject Middle East peace are motivated by feelings like the Crusader dream of redeeming the land as a religious act.

Armstrong explored modern parallels to the Crusades in the book *Holy War* and has a history of Jerusalem coming out soon. She said the Crusaders' zealotry is echoed in today's violence in the region.

"To kill another person as the Crusaders did, as in the suicide bombers and as in the case of [the assassination of Yitzhak] Rabin, is a form of idolatry," she said. "It's putting the Holy Land in the place of God."

HISTORIANS ARE scheduled to meet in Beersheba this month to study the killing of thousands of Jews by Teutonic knights heading to join Peter the Hermit's march to Jerusalem in the summer of 1096.

Benjamin Kedar, a history professor at the Hebrew University, said the murders in Germany's Rhineland were the largest massacres of Jews up to that time, and that they set a pattern for the following Crusades.

It was an age when Christian zeal precipitated murder. Europe's Christians felt under siege. The Moslems' advance into Europe had brought them rule in Spain and

Sicily. Orthodox Christians were threatened by Islam in the East.

Cries of "Deus le volt!" ("God wills it!") greeted pope Urban II in November 1095 when he urged a Crusade in Clermont, France. Bishops and cardinals fell to their knees. Kings and knights soon volunteered in the thousands.

While Peter's peasant army was wiped out by Islamic forces in October 1096 in what is now Turkey, the itinerant preacher survived to urge on the knights who captured Jerusalem three years later. The Christian forces slaughtered the city's Jews, who had taken refuge in a synagogue, and its Moslems.

Saladin recaptured Jerusalem on October 2, 1187, but did not repeat the atrocities. The Christians had sued for peace, and all were allowed to leave the city on payment of a small ransom. To the dismay of his treasurers, Saladin freed many of those who were too poor to pay it.

NINE MAJOR Crusades were mounted in 1270, with some even aimed at Egypt as desire for land replaced the spread of Christendom as a motive. The wars ended on October 18, 1291, when the Crusaders were forced from their last stronghold, at Acre.

Today, Acre's city walls remain as evidence of the Crusades. Under the town are huge vaulted rooms that were part of the Crusaders' Church of St. John.

The Crusaders left a series of castles - many in sight of each other for defensive purposes - stretching through Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Turkey.

In southern Lebanon, Beaufort Castle was fought over by Israelis and Palestinians during Operation Peace for Galilee in 1982. Israel still controls the castle.

The Crusades reverberate through the Middle East conflict in many other ways. One of the PLO's armed units, the Hattin Brigade, was named after the place in Galilee where Saladin delivered a decisive blow to the Crusaders in 1187.

And Sheikh Omar Abdel-

Crusader chronology

1096-1099 - First Crusade. Christians capture Jerusalem, found Latin kingdom.

1147-1149 - Second Crusade. Begun after loss of Byzantine city of Edessa to Moslems. Ends in failure.

1189-1192 - Third Crusade. Organized after Saladin's capture of Jerusalem in 1187. Fails to regain city, but treaty gives Christians right of access.

1202-1204 - Fourth Crusade. European Christian knights capture Byzantine city of Constantinople, now Istanbul.

1212 - Children's Crusade. Thousands of children are recruited as Crusaders but wind up dying of hunger and disease or being sold into slavery.

1217-1221 - Fifth Crusade. Crusaders capture Damietta in Egypt but are then defeated by forces of Sultan al-Kamil.

1228-1229 - Sixth Crusade. German King Frederick II leads army to the Holy Land and achieves truce with Moslems, but this is short-lived.

1248-1254 - Seventh Crusade. King Louis IX of France, later St. Louis, leads force against Egypt but is captured. Ransomed, he strengthens Christian defenses in the Holy Land.

1270 - Eighth Crusade. Louis IX leads another Crusade but dies after landing in Tunis.

Get Mom out of the saddle



Dear Ruthie, My mother is constantly harping on that I should get married. I am 35, have a job I love, and meet men all the time. The trouble is that no man I've met is someone I'd be willing to share my life with. On most dates, I'm hard put not to fall asleep. I've tried to explain this to my mother, but she won't listen. How can I get her off my back? It's gotten to the point where I turn on my answering machine just to avoid her calls.

Disgruntled Daughter
Ramat Hasharon

Dear Disgruntled, I've got news for you: If your mother is someone who "rides your back," even marriage won't get her off. And just as only your internal readiness and actual desire to marry will cause you to stay awake while dating, only a genuine, conflict-free message conveyed to your mother will provide her with the stirrup to dismount.

Using your answering machine to convey this message is legitimate. In this case, however, it sounds as though you might be employing it to cower from her instead. If so, Mom will remain in the saddle by remote control, even when unable to reach you by phone.

Dear Ruthie, I have been sharing a rented apartment with my sister for three years. We've always been very

close, and are only a year apart in age.

My problem is this: My boyfriend and I have decided to live together. My sister does not want to live with us. But she also refuses to move out and find her own place.

She thinks that since I'm the one who is changing the arrangement, I should be the one to move. I disagree. I would love it if she stayed. So you see, I am not forcing her out. She's the one who doesn't want to continue living here. What should we do about it?

Sizzling Sister
Kiryat Gat

Dear Sizzling, When you confront the real issue here, the question of what to do will become as easily solved as it is secondary.

By wanting your boyfriend to move into the apartment, it is not only the "arrangement" you are altering. More importantly, you are shifting the constellation of loyalties. Whereas previously, you and your sibling were a close-knit duo, now you are "teaming up" with a new member. Your sister, apparently, does not wish to be one of this particular kind of threesome. This is her prerogative. Probably a healthy one, at that.

Had you been sensitive enough to appreciate the various emotions which she's been experiencing as a result of your new alliance, the fight over the rights to the lease

could have been avoided. Which leads to one final point: If simulated marriage is behind your desire to live with your boyfriend in the first place, perhaps you and he should start out by looking for a place together. If it's not, you might want to reconsider the whole thing.

Dear Ruthie, I am an American about-to-be-divorced mother of three in the same predicament as the Norwegian woman who wrote to you a couple of weeks ago [about not being able to take her children back to her home country, away from their Israeli father]. As her address was not included, I'm hoping you have it. I think you'd be doing us a great favor by connecting our lives.

I'm sure there are others out there in similar circumstances, who might wish to share their common hopes, fears and frustrations with me and one another.

In Need of Support
Jerusalem

Dear In Need, Since the woman in question wrote to me anonymously, I am unable to make a connection between you. However, you are undoubtedly right about not being alone. As such, I suggest you form your own support group, by placing an ad in the newspaper. Then it will be you doing the "great favor."

Letters should be addressed to: Dear Ruthie, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem. For E-mail: editors@post.co.il



Count Us In - An incredible story of a grassroots crusade to free Soviet Jewry, involving large numbers of volunteers, Jews and non-Jews. Told by Wendy Eisen, herself a distinguished campaigner, it takes us behind the scenes to strategy meetings, to the streets where demonstrators in their thousands marched in support of the campaign, to the Soviet Union where visiting Canadians confronted brutal Soviet authorities, while making contact with beleaguered refuseniks. Foreword by Martin Gilbert. Hardcover, 334 pp.

JP Special Price: NIS 89 plus NIS 9 p & h in Israel

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Cruelty, treachery and pogroms

TO some in the West the era of the Crusades retains an aura of knights in shining armor. But the reality was more cruel than romantic.

Certainly the period had its romantic figures. Probably the most famous were King Richard the Lionheart of England and the Moslem conqueror Saladin, whose Arabic name Salah al-Din means "reformer of the faith." Adversaries in the Third Crusade, the two men reached a treaty that gave Christian pilgrims access to Jerusalem and left a Crusader kingdom on the Mediterranean coast.

It was one of many treaties to be broken in the Crusades. Treachery and massacre marked the crusading era from its start with Peter the Hermit lead-

ing a peasant army in 1096 to the Christian defeat at Acre nearly 200 years later.

As Peter's poor Crusaders foraged for food, they got into battles in Hungary and killed 4,000 people. Later, the Crusaders killed Orthodox Christians - whom they were supposed to save from Islam. Pogroms that murdered thousands of Jews became a pattern for the zealous Crusaders.

Once during negotiations for a truce, Richard suspected Saladin was stalling and ordered the slaughter of nearly 3,000 Moslem captives as Moslem warriors watched from across a valley. Saladin then ordered the massacre of his Christian hostages held in Damascus.



NACHUM TIM GIDAL: Jerusalem, 3000 Years. 3000 Jahre. 3000 Ans.

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THE WAY WE WERE...

Sassia Gelb's new book provides a sometimes funny, sometimes sad but always honest perspective of life in the kibbutz. Creative illustrations drawn by fellow members of Kibbutz Kfar Blum and by relatives and friends from Israel and abroad, add a special dimension to the anecdotes which only a long-time member of a kibbutz could tell. Softcover, 160 pp.

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Thursday, June 20, 1996

Likud win scaring Arab economies

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Binyamin Netanyahu's election as prime minister has caused gloom in Lebanon, where economists say delays in achieving peace will hurt both the fragile local economy and economic development in the region.

Lebanon's economy, heavily dependent on inflows of capital from abroad, is likely to be the worst hit by the uncertainties Netanyahu brings to the peace process, economists say.

But the regional economic situation will also be affected, because most Arab countries face worsening problems that need peace, structural reforms, and foreign investment to overcome, they say.

"Taking into consideration the direct link between political and economic factors, I am rather pessimistic about the perspective in the region if the peace process takes a very long time," economist Kamal Hamdan said.

Arab countries are plagued by low growth, budget deficits, falling oil prices, and growing indebtedness, and the declining wages earned by expatriates in the Gulf are reducing remittances to other regional countries which

partly depend on them.

Countries like Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Syria could experience social problems and political instability in three to five years if the economic situation continues to deteriorate, Hamdan said.

Some Arab financiers also say they now fear a slowdown in the inflow of capital, rather than the "peace dividend" they had been looking forward to from former prime minister Shimon Peres.

Beirut bankers, ever optimistic, say they are waiting to see how potential investors react to the new situation, but brokers on the Cairo stock exchange say any signs of tension in the region could scare off international funds which have been showing new interest in Egyptian shares.

"Many investors consider the whole Middle East to be just one country," said Mohamed Hossny, vice-president of the Triple-A Securities brokerage house. "They might think again about Egypt."

Qatar, the Gulf state which moved fastest to establish economic ties with Israel, says it will stop dealing directly with Israel if Netanyahu does not continue the peace process.



New Finance Minister Dan Meridor (right) is congratulated by his predecessor Avraham Shohat at yesterday's changeover ceremony.

Meridor vows to slash deficits, inflation

FINANCE Minister Dan Meridor yesterday said he sees reducing inflation and treating the budget and current-account deficits as the most urgent tasks ahead of him.

Meridor, who said he hopes to re-channel the economy's growth "to its correct course," spoke during the change-of-the-guard ceremony in which his predecessor, Avraham Shohat, handed him over the ministry.

"I am familiar with quite a few of the employees here," said Meridor, looking at the many staffers who attended the ceremony, and referring to his previous tenures as justice minister during 1989-1992, acting finance minister

for several months in 1990, and cabinet secretary between 1981 and 1984.

Meridor said he would do his best to promote competition, both domestically and internationally, and to reduce government interference in the economy.

While he warmly complemented his successor, Shohat used the opportunity to openly criticize Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel for "having become politically involved in a manner never before seen at the central bank."

Frenkel, who shortly after the elections accepted Prime Minister

Binyamin Netanyahu's offer to become finance minister, only to see that idea fall through due to Likud pressure, said in reply that he was not involved in the formulation of any party's platform, and that he never has been, nor intends to become, politically identified.

Concerning the new economic council, which Netanyahu has decided to establish under Frenkel's leadership, he said it does not reflect an intention to reshape economic decision-making gravity centers, and that he and Meridor intend to work closely together, due to their similar economic views and their long-time acquaintance.

Gov't to sell remaining Union Bank shares

MI Holdings, the state firm in charge of selling government companies, intends to issue all the government's remaining holdings in the Union Bank of Israel in August.

MI Holdings general manager Meir Yacobson yesterday said the issue is scheduled for August on the basis of Union Bank's financial statements for the first quarter of 1996. The bank's first draft prospectus will be submitted to the Securities Authority for approval in a few weeks.

The government plans to issue 23.2 percent of Union Bank's shares on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. In addition, Bank Leumi will issue its remaining 16.8% holding, increasing the total issue to 40%.

MI Holdings reportedly ordered an evaluation of Union Bank from attorney Yosi Sahek. Attorney

Moshe Ne'eman was appointed as lawyer for the sale.

Union Bank is part of the Shlomo Elyahu group, which gained control in June 1993 when ownership was transferred from the government for \$85.5m.

Union Bank completed the first quarter of 1996 with a net profit of NIS 17.1 million, compared with a net profit of NIS 18.3m. in the same period last year. At the end of March, the bank's shareholders' capital reached NIS 569.1m.

This week David Friedman, who until recently managed Bank Leumi, became chairman of Union Bank. Friedman took over from Yehuda Gil, who resigned approximately one year ago.

Meanwhile, MI Holdings said it has nearly completed an appropriate contract for the sale of Bank Hapoalim.

Jerusalem Post Staff

Jobless down to 6.3% in 1st quarter

UNEMPLOYMENT in the first quarter of the year stood at 6.3 percent, compared to 7% in the corresponding period in 1995, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced yesterday.

However, the seasonally adjusted total of 6.6% shows little change from the 6.7% in the previous year.

From January to March, 134,000 people were unem-

ployed, but actively seeking work, a 9% reduction on the first quarter last year.

The trend of reduction in female unemployment has continued, down to 7.7%. This follows 8.1% in the last quarter of 1995, and 9.8% 15 months ago.

On the other hand, male unemployment rose from 5.6%

throughout 1995, to 5.9%, reported the CBS.

Meanwhile, 9,700 new immigrants were seeking employment in May, compared to 8,100 in April, according to the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry's monthly statistics, also published yesterday. Of those looking for work, new immigrants comprised 9.3%, a rise of 0.7% on the previous month.

De Beers first half diamond sales sparkle

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - Diamond giant De Beers reported dazzling first half gemstone sales of \$2.748 billion yesterday, beating most analysts' expectations.

The value of sales by the South African conglomerate's London-based Central Selling Organization (CSO) were up 8.2 percent on the same time last year, buoyed by strong demand in major retail jewelry markets.

"It's good news in the sense that it does reflect the fact that the diamond industry is basically in a renewed growth phase, and De Beers is fully in control of the industry," said Des Meyers, analyst at local stockbrokers G O'Flaherty.

Analysts polled by Reuters forecast a sales figure range of \$2.5b. to over \$2.7b.

De Beers shares jumped on the

news, adding 300 cents to 140.25 and as investors reacted positively to the better-than-expected results.

De Beers director Tim Capon told Reuters in London that the full-year picture also looked bright because of consumers' renewed appetite for gems.

"We are expecting that strong demand for retail jewelry to underpin our results for the year," he said.

Analysts said De Beers' fortunes had improved, thanks to good retail off-take, particularly in Japan and the US, and because fewer rough stones were leaking onto the market from Russia.

The CSO, founded in the 1930s, handles about 75% of world sales of rough stones to diamond centers.

"The increase in sales is due to the Russians no longer selling stones directly onto the market," said one analyst.

De Beers agreed a new marketing deal with Russian producer Almaz Rossii Sakha (ARS) in February. Under a previous, five-year deal Russia was obliged to sell 95% of its rough diamonds through the CSO.

However, finalization of the new agreement has been delayed by the political situation in the run-up to Russia's presidential elections, De Beers said.

But Meyers said the delay was out of undue concern.

De Beers said it would continue to work with Russia on the cooperative basis signaled by the signing of the memorandum of understanding on February 23.

The company painted an upbeat picture of the world's retail diamond markets.

"1995 sales were up 5%-6% in value over the year before and retail sales have continued to increase this year," it said.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Vocaltec, the Herzliya-based manufacturer of software that allows voice and audio communication over the Internet, has announced the release of Version 4 of its Internet Phone software.

Voice mail, document sharing, and file transfer are among the additional capabilities the Windows '95-compatible software offers. Vocaltec recently announced the release of the Macintosh version of its software. *Jennifer Friedlin*

The Center for Mechatronics, an institute designed to upgrade the skills of mechanical and electronic engineers and technicians, will begin its first session on June 30 in Dimona.

The 28 students, all of whom are new immigrants, will spend 700 hours over the next five months learning about today's high-tech factories and how to apply their skills to suit their needs.

The school was financed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Jewish Agency, and Degem Systems. *Jennifer Friedlin*

The Indian Embassy said it is concerned by reports about possible contamination of the country's exported wheat with the usitrago fungus.

The suggestion that importing nations are destroying the wheat was firmly rejected by first economic and commercial secretary, Anita Nayyar. "This particular fungus is prevalent in a lot of wheat grown in the world today, it is only to be avoided if the wheat is to be used for seed," Nayyar said.

It is understood that within the last fortnight, one African government did attempt to destroy the wheat it had imported from India, but the matter is still being challenged in the courts. *David Harris*

Shargad Orchanim will open a chain of Movenpick Marche roadhouses on main thoroughfares throughout the country.

The \$50 million project is being funded by Shargad Orchanim and the kibbutzim that have agreed to provide the land. The first Movenpick roadhouse will open in the fall in the North.

Kobi Pe'er, director general of Shargad Orchanim, said that within five years, 10 roadhouses will be built. *Jennifer Friedlin*

Histadrut fears for workers under Meridor

THE Histadrut is afraid that the new government, anxious to hasten privatization and slash the state budget, will issue economic decrees that hurt workers' income.

While extolling their good wishes to new Finance Minister Dan Meridor, Histadrut leaders yesterday warned him not to take one-sided steps which could worsen working conditions. They expressed concern over his announcements vis-a-vis the need for a drastic slash in the state budget and in public services.

Histadrut Chairman MK Amir Peretz said "before the new finance minister makes plans to cut budgets and curb inflation, he should realize that hired workers have been paying the full price for economic growth in recent years. He must turn to other sectors in the economy - those who enjoyed government financial support and benefits."

Peretz noted that "if anyone wants to reduce labor costs and demands that we cut the cost of living increment, he should know we will reject that out of hand."

Peretz criticized Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's privatization plans as announced in his inauguration speech at the Knesset, calling them a one-sided move which violates an earlier commitment to coordinate privatization steps with the Histadrut. The Histadrut and large union leaders of all the government corporations agreed that until now, privatization has one meaning: mass dismissals and the violation of hired workers' wage and pension rights.

Peretz called on Meridor to continue the tax reform initiated by the Labor government and to reduce the tax burden on employees, especially middle-income earners. He offered the Histadrut's cooperation in dealing with soaring inflation.

Peretz also said he was worried by the new government's decision to transfer the civil service commission to the Prime Minister's Office, stressing "there is no doubt that this is the beginning of a politicization process."

Bezeq expects to join worldwide phone project

BEZEQ last week signed a memorandum of understanding giving it an opportunity to join a communications project involving the Global Star satellites. Global Star plans to supply worldwide telecommunications services via dozens of low-flying satellites. A single cellular phone could then be used to make calls to anywhere on Earth.

If the deal is concluded, Bezeq would build a reception station as a gateway to the Middle East.

Bezeq director-general Yitzhak Kaul, who signed the memorandum with Anthony Naara, a senior project director for Global Star, is also interested in a public tender to build cellular phone networks in two states in Brazil. Returning from a tour of North and South America, Kaul said yesterday that he met with officials of the Embratel holding company, which owns a number of Brazilian telecommunications subsidiaries.

Shekem signs deal with fashion chain Next

SHEKEM will open independent stores under the Next trade name, within the framework of an exclusive representation agreement with the European fashion chain. Shekem managing director Amnon Dick announced yesterday.

Shekem will invest \$2 million in the opening of three stores in

Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem. The stores will open in 1997, and will include men's, women's, and children's wear and accessories.

Dick said this is the first time Shekem will open independent stores. Negotiations started several months ago, after Next examined a number of local firms in the fashion field as part of its strategy to expand into new markets.

The local Next chain will operate within Shekem's department store division, under the management of Ehud Peled.

Next is a public company traded on the London exchange. The company, which operates more than 300 stores worldwide, ended 1995 with a sales turnover of \$1.1 billion and a net profit of \$150m.

TARGET 0370 Mutual Fund for Foreign Residents	
Date:	18.6.96
Purchase Price:	150.17
Redemption Price:	147.94

PRIME 0371 Mutual Fund for Foreign Residents	
Date:	18.6.96
Purchase Price:	109.47
Redemption Price:	108.02

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BEZEQ, The Israel Telecommunications Corp. Ltd.

Tender No. 65/96/117/0
DEVELOPMENT OF
VEHICLE/DRIVER PAGING SYSTEM

The following general conditions apply:

- Pre-conditions:
 - Parties submitting bids must comply with all laws, including the requirement to keep account books, be an authorized trader, be registered, hold valid licenses to trade, and comply with all relevant standard specifications.
 - Willingness to provide a guarantee as explained in the tender documents.
 - Compliance with the pre-conditions as set out in tender documents.
- The tender documents can be obtained from Room 809, Tenders and Ordering Department of the Purchasing Division, 15 Rehov Hazvi, Jerusalem, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, Sunday to Thursday (Tel. 02-3856145). The tender documents will be provided on submitting a receipt of payment for NIS 1,000.
 - In Israel, payment should be made into Bezeq's Postal Bank account no. 5-311757.
 - Overseas suppliers should make payment into Bezeq's account no. 12-901-97633/64, at the Jerusalem main branch of Bank Leumi Ltd.

The cost of the documents cannot be returned. The receipt, together with details of your company, including authorized trader's number, may be faxed to 972-2-378113. Please verify by phone that your fax has been received.
- Bids should be placed in the tenders box at 15 Rehov Hazvi, Jerusalem, not later than July 30, 1996, at 6 p.m.
- No undertaking is given to accept the lowest or any bid, or to order the entire work from one source. Bids sent by fax or telegram will not be considered.

BEZEQ, The Israel Telecommunications Corp. Ltd.

Tender No. 17/96/003/0
OPTIC CABLE

The following general conditions apply:

- Pre-conditions:
 - Parties submitting bids must comply with all laws, including the requirement to keep account books, be an authorized trader, be registered, hold valid licenses to trade, and comply with all relevant standard specifications.
 - Willingness to provide a guarantee as explained in the tender documents.
 - Compliance with the pre-conditions as set out in ISO-9000.
- The tender documents can be obtained from the Tenders and Ordering Department of the Purchasing Division, 15 Rehov Hazvi, Jerusalem, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, Sunday to Thursday. The tender documents will be provided on submitting a receipt of payment for NIS 1,000.
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ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS

Patch (foreign currency deposit rates) (6.5.96)

Currency (deposit term)	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$50,000)	4.65	4.70	4.70	5.20
Forward sterling (£100,000)	4.125	4.20	4.20	4.50
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.750	1.750	1.750	2.125
Swiss franc (SF 300,000)	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.760

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (19.6.96)

Currency basket	CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Bank
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	3.2514	3.2773	3.177	3.24	3.6472
German mark	2.1322	2.1297	2.03	2.20	2.1777
Forward sterling	4.3828	3.0772	4.91	5.15	5.0220
French franc	0.0392	0.0392	0.03	0.03	0.0326
Japanese yen (100)	2.9927	3.0410	2.94	2.94	1.9157
Dutch guilder	1.8041	1.8949	1.87	1.87	2.0295
Swiss franc	2.9235	2.9554	2.84	2.88	4.4919
Swedish krona	0.4895	0.4974	0.48	0.48	0.6575
Norwegian krona	0.4980	0.5031	0.48	0.48	0.6211
British pound	0.2541	0.2631	0.24	0.24	0.6575
Finland mark	0.0055	0.0055	0.005	0.005	0.7237
Canadian dollar	2.2629	2.4011	2.32	2.44	2.9810
Australian dollar	2.5228	2.6940	2.52	2.64	2.9736
S. African rand	0.7442	0.7628	0.67	0.67	0.7484
Belgian franc (10)	1.0371	1.0382	1.01	1.07	1.0425
Australian shilling (10)	3.0242	3.0322	2.96	3.13	2.1241
Indian rupee (1000)	2.1068	2.1429	2.07	2.15	4.8944
Jordanian dinar	—	—	4.50	4.81	1.0289
Egyptian pound	—	—	0.02	—	—
ECU	4.0943	4.0944	4.05	—	4.0280
Iran ryal	6.1419	6.2945	5.08	5.30	5.1782
Spanish peseta (100)	2.8280	2.8588	2.85	2.91	2.8441

* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

03-5129111

203.57

Key Representative Rates table with columns for currency, rate, and change.

Buchanan steps into China trade fracas

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Conservative commentator Pat Buchanan, still technically keeping his hat in the ring for the Republican US presidential nomination, yesterday launched a television campaign urging Congress to defeat extension of favorable tariffs to China.

Buchanan taped a 30-second television commercial that will start airing immediately over Cable News Network and Washington television stations telling Congress to "put common decency ahead of corporate profit."

Congress was currently debating whether to approve or overturn President Bill Clinton's decision to extend Most Favored Nation trading status to China for another year, offering the same low tariffs the US accords its trading allies.

Buchanan and other opponents to normalized trade relations with China argue that China has a record of human rights abuses, has sold nuclear technology to Pakistan, and violated international copyright agreements on movies, books, and music.

"President Clinton wants to extend trade favors to communist China," the Buchanan ad says. "But look how this awful regime treats its own people - young mothers are forced into abortions and sterilizations."

"Teen-age girls are abducted and sold into slavery, baby girls in state orphanages are beaten, starved, and left to die. We just can't do normal business with people like this. Let America be America again. Let's out common decency ahead of corporate profit."

Bob Dole, who has locked up the Republican presidential nomination in primary fights against Buchanan and other challengers, supports unconditional renewal of the same trade treatment to China as other US trading allies.

Large table titled 'TEL AVIV STOCKS' containing market data, multi-sided trading, and two-sided trading information.

US losses, threat of interest hike bring down stocks

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET table showing indices like 203.57 (-1.15%) and 214.72 (-1.12%).

THE stock market fell yesterday after three days of gains, following Tuesday's losses on Wall Street, particularly by Israeli technology companies, and amid expectations that the Bank of Israel will raise interest rates.

The Maof Index fell 1.12 percent to 214.72, and the Two-Sided Index fell 1.15% to 203.57. Of 990 shares trading, nearly five times as many fell as rose.

Some NIS 64.9 million worth of shares changed hands, 9.3 million above Tuesday's level and about five million below last week's average trading level.

"Israeli companies didn't do well yesterday, and there are expectations the market in the US will fall further," said Eitan Shtrikman, a fund manager at the Zeler Aviglon.

Declining shares included Nice-Systems, a voice recording systems manufacturer, which fell 8.25%. Its American Depository Receipts fell to 18% on Tuesday from 20% Monday.

Cial Electronic Industries fell 3% following declines in ECI Telecommunications, which dropped 1 to 23 Tuesday. Cial owns 26% of ECI, which is not traded in Tel Aviv.

Shtrikman added that losses were also prompted by expectations that the central bank will announce an interest rate increase next week, when it sets monetary policy for July.

"We can't forget that higher interest rates are waiting," he said. Investors were also disappointed that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has appeared indecisive for the past several days, when it was unclear who was to be appointed to which ministry, said Shtrikman. And then on Tuesday, Netanyahu announced several ministerial changes within hours of being sworn in.

Falling shares after losses on Wall Street included Koor Industries, which fell 0.5%. Koor's American Depository Receipts fell to a six-month low of 17% Tuesday from 17% on Monday. Tadiran fell 1.25%, and Bezeq 1%.

Africa Israel dropped 1.25%. Investors are concerned that real estate prices will fall, said Shtrikman. Most chemical shares fell, with Israel Chemicals losing 2.5%.

Makhteshim Chemical Works falling 2.75%, and Dead Sea Works falling 2.25%. Dead Sea Bromine rose 1%. Bank Hapoalim fell 0.75%; Bank Leumi 1%, and First International Bank 0.5%. Teva also fell 0.5%.

Gaining shares included Elite Industries, which rose 0.5% (Bloomberg). LONDON (Reuters) - Here is how major stock markets outside the United States ended yesterday.

LONDON - Leading UK shares mostly closed at slightly lower levels yesterday, largely unimpressed by a sudden sharp rise in the Dow, though ending the session towards the top end of the day's tight trading range. The FTSE 100 index closed down 3.2 points at 3,753.2.

FRANKFURT - German shares end bourse session slightly ahead, boosted by some selective buying, especially in retail sector. Dealers say market stalled around current levels ahead of DAX futures and options expiry tomorrow, which seen pushing for a close around 2,550. Wall Street seen as key for later trade.

The 30-share DAX index closed up five points at 2,554.29. In post-bourse trade the index stood at 2,546.04 down 9.77. PARIS - French stocks ended slightly weaker and just above solid technical support yesterday, with kitchen appliance maker Mnlux backing the trend in surge 21 percent as investors hailed its restructuring plans. The blue-chip CAC-40 index ended 7.24 points down at 2,100.70.

ZURICH - Swiss shares ended higher yesterday, hampered by technical factors and short-covering. The Swiss Market Index of leading shares ended up 14.1 points at 3,642.4. The broader Swiss Performance Index was up 5.70 at 2,353.80. Volume was moderate, with underlying sentiment positive, traders said.

TOKYO - Stocks ended mixed yesterday after directionless trade, erasing most earlier gains on sales in the late afternoon. Reheated interest rate jitters and overnight gains in the yen against the dollar made investors cautious about taking fresh positions. The Nikkei average rose 34.96 points, or 0.16 percent, to close at 22,367.36.

HONG KONG - Shares ended modestly lower in hushed pre-holiday trade yesterday, weighed down by falls in Wall Street stocks and the US dollar. The blue chip Hang Seng Index eased 48.31 points or 0.44 percent to end at 10,904.47.

SYDNEY - Australian shares closed up but hit their highs yesterday after profit taking ate into gains inspired by the stability of the copper price over the past two days in the wake of the Sumitomo copper trading fiasco. The All Ordinaries index ended 4.9 points higher at 2,233.2.

JOHANNESBURG - South African gold shares charged higher in active trade, hoisting the index over three percent as gold held above the \$386-an-ounce level and looked to go better. The overall index ended 40.6 points up at 6,863.5, the industrial index was off 3.6 points at 8,143.6 and the gold index bounced up 54.3 points to 1,832.2.

UK shares down slightly

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - Here is how major stock markets outside the United States ended yesterday.

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JOHANNESBURG - South African gold shares charged higher in active trade, hoisting the index over three percent as gold held above the \$386-an-ounce level and looked to go better. The overall index ended 40.6 points up at 6,863.5, the industrial index was off 3.6 points at 8,143.6 and the gold index bounced up 54.3 points to 1,832.2.

STOCKS MOSTLY LOWER WALL STREET REPORT

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES table with columns for MARK, STERLING, YEN, SFY, FFY.

Tobacco companies sued by nicotine-addicted smokers

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Five major tobacco companies were sued yesterday by New Yorkers claiming to be addicted to nicotine, in the biggest fallout so far from last month's dismissal of a national federal class action against the industry.

Philip Morris Cos Inc., R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., American Tobacco Co., Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. and Lorillard Tobacco Co. were each sued in separate state actions filed in New York Supreme Court.

The five suits were filed by a group of about 60 prominent personal injury law firms, which brought the ill-fated Castano federal class action on behalf of all smokers addicted to nicotine.

Last month a federal appeals court panel in New Orleans dismissed the national class action on grounds that it was too unwieldy to bring as one case. If the certification had been upheld, it would have been the largest class action in US history.

The court did not rule on the merits of the allegations, which included charges the industry hid information about the addictive nature of smoking and that it could control the level of nicotine in cigarettes.

In response, the Castano lawyers are bringing separate state class actions across the country with similar allegations. The New York suits are believed to be the biggest so far.

Other cases have been filed in Louisiana, Baltimore, New Mexico and Washington, DC. Martis Ann Bracht, a New York member of the Castano group, said the cases filed Wednesday are far different from the Castano class action.

"They are simple and very straightforward," she said, explaining that they allege only two claims and involve only New York state laws. Castano had eight claims and involved laws from every state.

The suits accuse the companies of fraud and allege they violated New York's consumer protection laws prohibiting deceptive practices. "We allege that they knew nicotine is addictive but they concealed that from the consuming public in order to sell more cigarettes and make more money," said Bracht, one of the lawyers who filed the cases.

Canada panel expected to support Arctic diamond mine

VANCOUVER (Reuters) - A diamond mine proposed for Canada's Arctic is expected to gain the support of a government-appointed review panel in the next several days, analysts and officials said.

The panel's report will pave the way for the federal government to decide whether to grant final approval to the project, proposed by Australia's Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. (BHP) and Canada's Dia Met Minerals Ltd.

"Everybody ... is expecting this to go ahead," said Bverzen Securities analyst Valid Fathi. While analysts believe approval is virtually certain, a final decision from Ottawa is not expected for several weeks.

BHP, which has 51 percent of the venture, and Dia Met expressed optimism the mine at Lac des Grés in the Northwest Territories will proceed. "We are hoping to get approval ... by the end of August," said BHP spokeswoman Karen Azingier.

BHP, which has already spent \$126 million on the project, aims to begin construction in October. The mine, which would cost another \$511m, to bring into production, would likely begin commercial output in 1998.

The government-appointed review panel held public hearings in February and since then has been compiling its report, which is being submitted in Ottawa this week. While it is up to Canada's ministers of the environment and northern affairs to authorize the report's release, the agency in charge of the review process expects it will be made public soon, possibly Friday or next week.

"It is going to the ministers this week ... (Then) the panel's report will be made public by the ministers within a matter of days," said John Mathers of the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office.

The diamond mine, Canada's first, is forecast to produce 3 million to 5 million carats of diamonds a year over a 25-year life, although analysts believe there is scope for the project to be expanded. Revenues would average about \$400 million a year, they said.

During the review process, the mine plan attracted some criticism from environmentalists and

Takeover Panel warns on European move

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's Takeover Panel, which polices London's busy mergers and acquisitions market, said yesterday a European directive on statutory regulation would damage the market and lead to multi-million-pound lawsuits.

"It is ... inevitable that litigation would follow legislation ... this would undermine and do irreparable harm in the UK system of takeover regulation," Alistair Defriez, director-general of the panel told a news briefing.

A framework directive on governing the conduct of company takeovers in Europe was put forward by the European Commission in February. The Takeover Panel currently works outside a legal framework, although its rulings are subject to judicial review.

"Parties respect and observe our authority without resorting to the courts, except in very exceptional circumstances, and when these have arisen the courts have hitherto discouraged would-be litigants," Defriez said.

The Takeover Panel also argues the proposed directive, which is due to be debated in the European Parliament in September, would not bring any benefits in the European context, where some countries such as France already have a statutory system.

Defriez said the complex and fast-moving nature of takeovers means many are "frangant and contentious." "Vast amounts of money and ego can be at stake," he said, adding that the panel tries to ensure they are conducted in an orderly manner.

He said the watchdog was continuously seeking to improve standards, such as detecting the selective leaking of confidential information, insider dealing and detecting other breaches of the financial community's voluntary code of practice on takeovers.

The Financial Law Panel said in April it "discounts the possibility of draw-out nuisance litigation. There is no evidence to suggest the attitude of the courts will change after ... implementation."

In fact it was in the interests of the stronger players, many of which are British businesses, that rules and regulatory approaches are standardized throughout the European Union, its chief executive Colin Bamford said at the

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UK shares down slightly

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - Here is how major stock markets outside the United States ended yesterday.

LONDON - Leading UK shares mostly closed at slightly lower levels yesterday, largely unimpressed by a sudden sharp rise in the Dow, though ending the session towards the top end of the day's tight trading range. The FTSE 100 index closed down 3.2 points at 3,753.2.

FRANKFURT - German shares end bourse session slightly ahead, boosted by some selective buying, especially in retail sector. Dealers say market stalled around current levels ahead of DAX futures and options expiry tomorrow, which seen pushing for a close around 2,550. Wall Street seen as key for later trade.

The 30-share DAX index closed up five points at 2,554.29. In post-bourse trade the index stood at 2,546.04 down 9.77.

PARIS - French stocks ended slightly weaker and just above solid technical support yesterday, with kitchen appliance maker Mnlux backing the trend in surge 21 percent as investors hailed its restructuring plans. The blue-chip CAC-40 index ended 7.24 points down at 2,100.70.

ZURICH - Swiss shares ended higher yesterday, hampered by technical factors and short-covering. The Swiss Market Index of leading shares ended up 14.1 points at 3,642.4. The broader Swiss Performance Index was up 5.70 at 2,353.80. Volume was moderate, with underlying sentiment positive, traders said.

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PRINCE OF DENMARK - Allan Nielsen (1) raises his fist after scoring Denmark's second goal against Turkey last night. Denmark won 3-0 but did not advance to the quarter-finals. (Renter)

Germans advance, Italians out

MANCHESTER (AP) - Gianfranco Zola missed a seventh-minute penalty and Germany survived the expulsion of Thomas Strunz in a 0-0 tie yesterday that puts the Germans into the last eight of Euro 96 and the Italians out.

Because the Czech Republic gained a 3-3 tie with Russia in the other Group C game, the Czechs advanced on the back of their 2-1 victory over the Italians on Friday.

Meanwhile, Portugal dented Croatia 3-0 to leapfrog the Croats and finish top of Group D.

First-half goals by Luis Figo and Joao Pinto and a late strike by Domingos Oliveira gained the three points which sent the unbeaten Portuguese to the top of its group.

In other Group D action, Denmark, the defending champion, was eliminated despite beating Turkey 3-0 to wind up with four points.

The Daos' Brian Laudrup scored twice to take his total for

the competition to three and Allan Nielsen netted the other at Hillsborough. That result meant the Turks go home without a point from three games.

The quarter-finals Saturday are England-Spain at Wembley and France-Netherlands at Anfield.

In quarter-final matches scheduled for Sunday, Portugal meets the Czech Republic at Birmingham while Croatia takes on Germany in Manchester.

The Euro 96 rules said that if two teams finished level on points, the head-to-head results counted. With the Germans finishing top with seven points, the Czechs and the Italians tied for second with four. That Czech victory counted and Zola's penalty miss was a disaster for the Italians.

The Italian fans thought their team was through when they heard that Russia had hit back from two goals down to lead 3-2 at Anfield with five minutes remaining. But a late third by the Czechs tied the game up and that

put the Italians out.

In a game filled with passion and tension before 53,740 fans at Old Trafford, the Italians threw all they could at a superbly-organized German defense but couldn't score the goal they desperately needed.

Forced to abandon their traditional counter-attacking style of play, the Italians attacked from the start and Diego Fuser forced goalkeeper Andreas Koepcke into a spectacular diving save after only five minutes with a long-range drive.

Two minutes later, the Italians should have been ahead, but for some bad luck.

Pierluigi Casiraghi charged down a clearance by Matthias Sammer, broke through the middle and raced into the penalty area before he was brought down by goalkeeper Koepcke's outstretched legs.

The Italian players argued vigorously that Koepcke should have been sent off for the foul but at least celebrated the chance of

taking the lead.

Group A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	3	2	1	0	7	2	4
Netherlands	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Sweden	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
Switzerland	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

Group B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Spain	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Russia	3	0	1	2	3	4	1
Romania	3	0	0	3	1	4	0

Group C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	3	2	1	0	5	0	7
Czech Republic	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Italy	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Russia	3	0	1	2	4	3	1

Group D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Croatia	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Denmark	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Turkey	3	0	0	3	0	5	0

Yesterday's matches:
 Group C: Germany 0, Italy 0
 Russia 3, Czech Republic 3
 Group D: Denmark 3, Turkey 0
 Portugal 3, Croatia 1
 No matches today and tomorrow

Mirror, mirror: How will we do in Atlanta?

IF you can't stand the suspense of guessing how our athletes will do in Atlanta, just read the predictions instead. Director of the Elite Sport Unit, Dr. Itzik Ben-Melech, has drawn up a list of expected placings by local representatives.

Top of the class is wrestler Gocha Chichashvili who is expected to slot in somewhere between 1-6th place. Lower expectations are in line for Oreo Smadja and Yael Arad, Barcelona medalists, who should occupy spots 3-7.

Compartmentalized into 6-10th place are windsurfer Gal Friedman along with the Chantal brothers in the 470-Olympic class. Yoav Bruck is not expected to make the final and will have to settle with a 10-12th finish in the 50 meters freestyle.

Some of the other guesses are 8-12 for yachtsmen and women Shani Kedmi and Anat Fabrikant and 9-16 for fencer Lydia Hatuel-Zuckerman.

I guess we'll have to wait and see.

HEATHER CHAIT
THE LOCAL SCENE

Smooth sailing

Israel's 470-Olympians competed in the European Championships held in England. Nir and Ran Chantal placed 11th out of 70 while Kedmi and Fabrikant finished 10th out of 40.

Kayaker en route to Atlanta

Lior Carmi, awaiting the imminent go-ahead from the International Kayaking Union to hear that she definitely is in the Olympic delegation, helped dispel any doubts this week. Competing in the World Cup competition in the Czech Republic, Carmi took the silver medal in the 500m event, her favorite race.

Kudos for Ruskin

How very apt that on Monday, International Sports Day, Professor Hillel Ruskin from the Hebrew University's Cosell Center, re-

ceived an education prize and certificate in recognition of his contribution to physical education.

The prize, awarded by the Education Ministry, is a small gesture in comparison to Ruskin's devotion to the educational framework and his tireless efforts to awaken the public to the importance of exercise in daily living.

Smashnova at Wimbledon

Regardless of her slip in ranking to around 125 in the world, Anna Smashnova will be in action at Wimbledon next week. Her opponent in the first round will be Argentina's Ines Gorochategui, whom Smashnova beat in the junior final at Roland Garros in 1990 and at Indian Wells this year.

Eyal Shartov defeated Nicholas Larsoe (Sweden) 6-3, 7-6, and Gil Naor stopped Briton Colin Queen 6-4, 6-4 in the 10th International Wheelchair Tennis Tournament at Ramat Hasharon yesterday. The competition continues until Sunday.

Selig may go for top baseball post

MILWAUKEE (AP) - Bud Selig, who has been acting baseball commissioner since 1992, is seriously considering accepting the position as a fulltime job, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel said yesterday.

The newspaper said several baseball officials it had contacted said they expected Selig to take the job. It said those officials would not allow their names to be used.

Asked Tuesday whether he was leaning toward becoming commissioner fulltime, Selig said: "I really have no comment on that. We're busy trying to get a new stadium. I haven't had time to think about that."

Selig, president of the Milwaukee Brewers, has said a new stadium is needed to ensure the financial health of the club. But there have been continuing problems in lining up financing for the facility.

The Journal Sentinel said its baseball sources expected Selig to take the commissioner's job whether or not the Brewers get a new ballpark.

Sal Bando, the Brewers general manager, said he was aware of a growing movement among owners to get Selig to move to the commissioner's office.

"There's no doubt in my mind, with Bud's experience as an owner, his involvement in the labor situation and his knowledge of the game, he is by far the best candidate and only candidate," Bando said.

The newspaper said that many expect Selig to relinquish control of the Brewers to his daughter, Wendy Selig-Frieb, who has represented the team at ownership meetings. Selig-Frieb said she did not feel comfortable commenting on that speculation.

Belle's suspension cut

Controversial Cleveland Indians outfielder Albert Belle and reliever Julian Tavarez had their five-game suspensions reduced to three games by American League President Gene Budig on Tuesday.

The suspensions stemmed from their actions during a brawl-marred game against the Milwaukee Brewers on May 31. Both players had appealed the original punishment in meetings with AL brass last week.

The game in question featured Belle being hit by pitches - twice - Belle brawling into Milwaukee second baseman Fernando Vina with excessive force, and a total bench-clearing brawl in which an umpire was thrown to the ground.

Robinson wants Reds' job

Frank Robinson, a Hall of Famer who was the first black manager in the major leagues, has set his sights on another goal: running the Cincinnati Reds.

In an interview in yesterday's New York Times, Robinson said he has let National League president Leonard Coleman know of his desire to apply for the job of the Reds' chairman of the board to replace the beleaguered Marge Schott.

For conduct not considered in the best interests of baseball, the Reds' owner has given up control of the club until 1998. Schott was forced out by baseball's hierarchy for his continued use of racial and ethnic slurs.

"It's a shame that this outstanding organization has gone through this and what I would bring to the picture is a new, clean approach," said Robinson, a former star with the Reds. "The only thing I haven't done is run a team."

Should Robinson make the leap to the Reds' top job, it would mark yet another first in a career which has included many notable achievements. When he was named manager of the Cleveland Indians in 1974, he became the first black to achieve that position in the majors. Robinson is still the only player to be voted MVP in each league, winning with the Reds in 1961 and the Orioles in 1966.

Yanks ruin no-hitter, shutout en route to win over Twins

NEW YORK (AP) - Minnesota right-hander Brad Radke retired the first 20 batters before losing his no-hitter, shutout and victory in the span of five pitches in the seventh inning as the New York Yankees beat the Twins 2-0.

Radke (4-8) needed only 35 pitches to retire the first 15 Yankees and 21 more to get the next five outs. But with two outs in the seventh, Paul O'Neill sliced a double down the left-field line for the Yankees' first hit.

Radke then got two quick strikes on Tim Lincecum, who after fouling off a pitch, lined his 12th home run into the lower deck in right field. It was Martinez's 100th career home run.

Radke finished Tuesday's game with a three-hitter, throwing only 78 pitches in his first complete game in 16 starts this season.

(5-7) on a three-run homer by Carlos Delgado and Shawn Green's RBI triple.

Indians 9, Red Sox 7

Omar Vizquel drove in six runs with a grand slam, a run-scoring double and an RBI single against Boston.

The Indians' 11th straight victory over the Red Sox came after Cleveland trailed 6-0. But Vizquel's second career grand slam and Julio Franco's RBI double pulled the Indians within one.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
 Dodgers 9, Cubs 6 (1st)
 Cubs 7, Dodgers 4 (2nd)
 Rookie Brent Brown hit two solo home runs in the second

game, giving him three for the day and three for his career, as host Chicago earned a split of its doubleheader.

Brown, who entered the game 2-for-6 since being recalled from Triple-A Iowa on June 15, collected three hits in the second game and went 4-for-6 for the afternoon.

Delino DeShields hit a three-run homer and rookie Roger Cedeno had four hits and four RBIs in the opener, a 9-6 Dodgers' victory.

In the nightcap, Chicago's Mike Campbell (2-0) sent five innings, allowing two runs and three hits. He also had an RBI double.

Major League Leaders

AMERICAN LEAGUE				NATIONAL LEAGUE			
BATTING -	Barry Bonds, 352; Mike Trout, 348; Ichiro Suzuki, 347; Albert Pujols, 346; Adam Lind, 345; Ryan Howard, 344; Ryan Braun, 343; Matt Kemp, 342; Matt Kemp, 341; Matt Kemp, 340; Matt Kemp, 339; Matt Kemp, 338; Matt Kemp, 337; Matt Kemp, 336; Matt Kemp, 335; Matt Kemp, 334; Matt Kemp, 333; Matt Kemp, 332; Matt Kemp, 331; Matt Kemp, 330; Matt Kemp, 329; Matt Kemp, 328; Matt Kemp, 327; Matt Kemp, 326; Matt Kemp, 325; Matt Kemp, 324; Matt Kemp, 323; Matt Kemp, 322; Matt Kemp, 321; Matt Kemp, 320; Matt Kemp, 319; Matt Kemp, 318; Matt Kemp, 317; Matt Kemp, 316; Matt Kemp, 315; Matt Kemp, 314; Matt Kemp, 313; Matt Kemp, 312; Matt Kemp, 311; Matt Kemp, 310; Matt Kemp, 309; Matt Kemp, 308; Matt Kemp, 307; Matt Kemp, 306; Matt Kemp, 305; Matt Kemp, 304; Matt Kemp, 303; Matt Kemp, 302; Matt Kemp, 301; Matt Kemp, 300; Matt Kemp, 299; Matt Kemp, 298; Matt Kemp, 297; Matt Kemp, 296; Matt Kemp, 295; Matt Kemp, 294; Matt Kemp, 293; Matt Kemp, 292; Matt Kemp, 291; Matt Kemp, 290; Matt Kemp, 289; 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Detroit	18	52	.257	22.5

Central Division

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Cleveland	44	24	.647	-
Chicago	41	27	.603	3.0
Milwaukee	34	34	.500	10
Minnesota	30	38	.441	14
Kansas City	30	41	.423	15.5

West Division

W	L	Pct.	GB	
Texas	36	27	.569	-
Seattle	36	31	.537	3.0
California	36	36	.500	6.0
Oakland	32	38	.457	10.5

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division	W	L	Pct.	GB
Atlanta	43	28	.607	-
Montreal	40	29	.580	1.0
Florida	37	34	.522	4.5
New York	30	38	.441	12.5
Philadelphia	29	38	.429	13.5

Central Division

W	L	Pct.	GB	
Houston	36	36	.500	-
St. Louis	36	34	.514	1.0
Chicago	33	37	.471	2.0
Pittsburgh	32	37	.463	2.5
Cincinnati	27	38	.429	4.5

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W	L	Pct.	GB	
Los Angeles	36	35	.507	-
San Diego	37	36	.514	1.0
San Francisco	35	33	.515	1.5
Colorado	36	33	.515	1.5

TUESDAY'S AL RESULTS:
 Toronto 11, Seattle 3
 New York 2, Milwaukee 0
 Oakland 8, Detroit 5
 Texas 7, Baltimore 0
 Milwaukee 9, Kansas City 1
 Cleveland 9, Boston 7
 California 5, Colorado 4

TUESDAY'S NL RESULTS:
 Los Angeles 9, Chicago 6 (1st)
 Chicago 7, Los Angeles 4 (2nd)
 San Francisco 9, Florida 8 (1st)
 New York

IAI's \$650m. F-4 deal with Turkey in jeopardy

DAVID MAKOVSKY

IF THE consortium of banks led by Bank Hapoalim continues to delay issuing a promised loan to Turkey so that the country can have its Phantom F-4 jets refurbished in Israel, it could jeopardize the entire \$650 million deal, as there is a growing threat that an Islamic party will gain power in Ankara.

This message was conveyed in an urgent memorandum to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday from Zvi Elpeleg, Israel's ambassador to Turkey, diplomatic sources say. It apparently is being reinforced by President Ezer Weizman, who visited Turkey last week.

Under the deal agreed upon half a year ago, Israel agreed to offer state-backed guarantees so there would be no risk to the banks providing the loan, presuming the banks involved are Israeli. Therefore, it remains unclear why Bank Hapoalim is holding up the loan, though diplomatic sources suggest that the bank wants leverage in order to obtain IAI payment on an entirely different matter.

The sense of urgency of Elpeleg's message is due to a growing concern that the Islamic Refah party will shortly be part of a governing coalition. This party opposes Turkey's sharply expanding ties with Israel.



Israel Women's Network chairman Prof. Alice Shalvi (center) makes a point at yesterday's breakfast meeting with women MKs. From left: Naomi Blumenthal (Likud), Tamar Gozansky (Hadash), Anat Maor (Meretz), Shalvi, Sofia Landver (Labor), Naomi Chazan (Meretz). (Sark Uziel)

Amir removed from court

RAINE MARCUS

JUDGE Amnon Strashnov ordered Yigal Amir removed from court yesterday after his testimony for the defense in the trial of himself, his brother Haggai and Dror Adani devolved into a bitter exchange.

Following heated arguments between Amir and prosecutor Penina Guy, Judge Strashnov asked Amir if his brother knew of the pistol used to murder prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. Amir raised his voice and shouted: "In any case, you only hear what you want to hear! Be objective!"

Strashnov banged on the table and threatened to find him in contempt of court.

"Oh yes, and what sentence will I get?" sneered Amir, "100 years?" He was taken by police from the courtroom and brought back later.

Yesterday Amir repeated that neither Adani - who he described as a casual acquaintance - nor his brother were involved in the plot to kill Rabin and hurt Arabs. He said he told Adani his views on the possible murder of Rabin, but that Adani dismissed any such idea because he felt it would lead to civil war.

"He [Adani] said there was a *din rodef* against Rabin but it was forbidden to implement it," said

Amir. Following Amir's testimony, his brother Haggai, a former Givati soldier and a self-professed expert in firearms, told the court that for years huge amounts of IDF ammunition and explosives were freely available "in the field."

He was responding to charges of illegal possession of ammunition and bombs found at his family's Herzliya home. Haggai also manufactured the hollowpoint bullets used by his brother in Rabin's assassination.

"I didn't believe that murdering Rabin was the answer," he continued, "but I gave my brother ideas, ideas for which he would need me, so I would have control over him."

Former Eyal aviation leader and GSS informer Avishai Raviv was supposed to appear for the defense yesterday, but he could not be found.

Margalit Har-Shefi, arrested in connection with the murder plot, was also summoned, but her lawyer asked for an adjournment so she could receive suitable legal advice. Evidence against her has been transferred to the District Attorney's Office, but charges have not yet been brought. Judges Strashnov, Ze'ev Hammer and Shelly Timen agreed to postpone her testimony until mid-July.

Lobby to women MKs: Day-care subsidies, long school day are priorities

ESTHER HECHT

THE first item on the women's agenda in the 14th Knesset should be the establishment of a state authority on the status of women. A long school day for all children and appropriate day-care subsidies are the next two priorities, for they will enable women to hold full-time jobs.

These were part of a 14-point "guideline" presented to women MKs yesterday at a breakfast meeting with the Israel Women's Network, a nonpartisan women's lobby.

Six of the nine women MKs attended the breakfast meeting, which has become an annual tradition.

Achieving these goals will be no simple matter. MK Yael Dayan (Labor) said, because the only point regarding women on which there is consensus in the Knesset is the need to combat domestic violence. Dayan, co-chaired the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women, established as an ad hoc body in 1992

and declared a permanent committee in 1996.

The 13th Knesset made significant progress, passing 41 laws and amendments relating to the status of women, said IWN chairman Prof. Alice Shalvi, who hosted the meeting at her Jerusalem home. "Most of these resulted from the committee's work, and this shows the power of working together," she said.

But laws are not enough, according to Rachel Benziman, IWN's legal adviser. Regarding equal opportunity in the workplace, Israel has good laws but poor enforcement, she said. What is needed now is a public body to see to enforcement.

MK Naomi Chazan (Meretz) foresees much of the effort concerning women as preventing erosion of previous, hard-won achievements. Even more important, she said, is enlisting women to change the current electoral system, which works against women's political power.

Sara Netanyahu unsure she will attend her HU graduation

SARA Netanyahu, the wife of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is to receive her MA in psychology from Hebrew University today, but as of yesterday, she still had not decided whether she would attend the graduation ceremony.

"I still haven't decided," she told Army Radio. "I am thinking of all the difficulties the other attendees would have to face if my husband and I attended."

She indicated that she intends to continue working as a child psychologist.

"I hope that in several respects our life will remain as it has been. We have small children, and we will continue to raise them as normal children. I have a career, and I intend to continue with it. In other areas, of course, we hope to cope with the changes."

The security blanket that surrounds the prime minister in post-assassination Israel is one of the things with which the Netanyahuas will have to cope.

"This is one of the things we have to accept," she said, "and we accept it with great understanding." (Jtm)

WEATHER

Jerusalem	17-25
Tel Aviv	22-27
Haifa	22-28
Beersheba	21-31
Dead Sea	24-33
Alula	22-30
Samarie	17-29
Tiberias	24-32
Einat	24-35
Galilee	17-25

Forecast: Partly cloudy. Warmer.

AROUND THE WORLD

Location	Low	High	Wind	Cloud
Amsterdam	12	14	15	cloudy
Bahia	10	12	14	clear
Buenos Aires	10	12	14	clear
Calcutta	20	22	14	partly
Chicago	12	14	15	partly
London	10	12	14	partly
Madrid	10	12	14	partly
Moscow	10	12	14	partly
New York	10	12	14	partly
Paris	10	12	14	partly
Rome	10	12	14	partly
Sydney	10	12	14	partly
Tokyo	10	12	14	partly
Zurich	10	12	14	partly

Winning cards

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chacco card draw, the lucky cards were the king of spades, king of hearts, eight of diamonds, and king of clubs.

IDF: Amnesty report 'irresponsible'

Jerusalem Post Staff

THE IDF yesterday issued a response to the parts of Amnesty International's report for 1995 which referred to its activities, calling it "irresponsible" and presented in "a one-sided and distorted manner."

"Most serious of all," the IDF said, "is the fact that throughout the entire report, [Amnesty] did not see fit to mention the murderous terrorist attacks which took a bloody toll on IDF soldiers and innocent Israeli civilians. It should be noted that in 1995, 17 Israeli civilians and 31 IDF soldiers died as a result of terrorist attacks. In 1996 (thus far), 50 Israeli civilians and 18 IDF soldiers died as a result of terrorist attacks."

In condemning the destruction of homes of terrorist suspects by the IDF, Amnesty "for some reason left out that these were the houses of those who carried out horrendous terrorist attacks," the IDF statement said.

"The State of Israel reserves the right to defend itself from the constant terrorist activities of the Palestinian terrorist organizations... while making a maximum effort to prevent damage to the local population," the IDF said.

Israeli Arabs concerned over new government's minority guidelines

DAVID RUDGE

ISRAELI Arab council heads are to meet in Shfaram today to consider their reaction to the guidelines of the new government regarding the Arab sector.

Some Arab politicians described the guidelines as highly controversial, especially the clauses pledging to advance those minorities which have joined their fate with the Jewish people, and which have

served in the security forces.

"We see the composition of the new government and its guidelines as a bleak prophecy for the two peoples, the peace process and the hopes for equality," said Hadash secretary-general Mohammed Baraky.

"The government is treating the community as distinct ethnic groups and making equality con-

ditional on military service - something no other government has ever done," he said.

"This is something which is arousing strong, angry reactions among the Arab community in Israel. I'm very concerned that if this government does not realize the mistakes it is making, it could

lead to a new cycle of violence and bloodletting," he added.

Ibrahim Sarsur, head of Kaf Kasseem local council in the Triangle and a leading member of the Islamic Movement, also expressed concern and disappointment.

"On the basis of the guidelines,

I don't feel that this government is going on the right path towards establishing peace in the Middle East and achieving equality inside the State of Israel," he said.

"If I were to judge this government on the basis of its guidelines, then it would seem it has no chance of succeeding in facing the problems in the Middle East. Despite all that, I think we have

to wait and see how the government acts in practice," said Sarsur.

Hussein Suleiman, spokesman for the forum of Arab Council Heads, said there were some aspects of the government's guidelines which were encouraging, including the promise to increase the budgets of local Arab authorities, but that other features were "not to our taste."

Man convicted of murder after 15 years

RAINE MARCUS

A MAN accused of killing postal worker Raymond Smadja some 15 years ago was convicted of his murder by Tel Aviv District Court yesterday. But Rozen Ben-Shitreet, 32, of Bat Yam, could have been a free man had he taken his lawyers' advice and confessed to killing Smadja in self-defense.

Ben-Shitreet, a former laboratory assistant at the National Forensics Institute at Abo Kabir, was arrested around six months ago after his wife accused him of beating her. But when his fingerprints were taken, they were matched by computer with a print taken from the scene of Smadja's unsolved murder on August 16, 1981. He was then charged with the crime.

Ben-Shitreet, a juvenile at the time of the killing, admitted killing Smadja, but said he had

acted in self-defense when the victim tried to rape him. Because the statute of limitations on manslaughter had expired, he would probably have been freed had he stuck to his story and had the judges believed it.

But Ben-Shitreet decided to plead not guilty to murder, maintaining he had not stabbed Smadja to death. Although his lawyers, David Yiftah and Moshe Meroz, advised him to admit killing Smadja in self-defense, Ben-Shitreet insisted he was innocent and went ahead with the trial.

Yesterday Judge Shelly Timen and Ze'ev Hammer voted to convict him of premeditated murder, while Judge Amnon Strashnov found him guilty of manslaughter.

His lawyers said they would appeal the conviction to the Supreme Court.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Agency continuing activity in Russia
Russia has promised to restore the license of the Jewish Agency, the organization said in a statement yesterday.

Spokeswoman Lisa Gann-Perkal said agency officials who recently visited Russia received verbal assurances that the organization, which lost its license two months ago because of unspecified "breaches" of Russian law, would be re-accredited.

"Our activity [in Russia] is more or less continuing," she said. A statement by the agency said Russian officials promised to "make every effort to complete the registration process as quickly as possible." AP

Chlorine poisoning closes kibbutz pool
The Health Ministry yesterday closed the swimming pool at Kibbutz Sha'alvim after a six-year-old boy was seriously hurt from chlorine gas emissions there. The child was in serious condition in the respiratory intensive care unit of Assaf Harofeh Hospital in Tzrifin; two other children affected by the gas were treated and sent home.

Due to an electrical failure yesterday morning, a large amount of chlorine fumes leaked into the air at the pool. The ministry said the pool was operating without a license and that its infrastructure and maintenance were inadequate. It will be closed until further notice. Judy Siegel

Ashkelon reconsidering ban on sale of pork

EVELYN GORDON

THE High Court of Justice has given the city of Ashkelon 60 days to reconsider a by-law banning the sale of pork and pork products in the city.

A group of merchants had challenged the by-law in a petition to the court last year, charging that it violates the Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation. The merchants also argued that the law is inappropriate to the new character of the city. Over the past few years, many new immigrants from the CIS have moved to Ashkelon, and these immigrants - many of whom eat pork - now make up about one-quarter of the city's population, the petition said.

At a hearing yesterday, Justices Gavriel Bach, Dalia Dorn, and Yitzhak Zamir indicated that they saw merit in the petition, and were therefore prepared to issue a show-cause order. However, the city then asked for a 60-day extension in which to re-evaluate the law. The court agreed, and refrained from issuing the order.


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